



오크지만 잔양해

이정민
판타지 장편소설

1

몬스터

Praise the Orc!

– 오크지만 찬양해! –

- Volume 8 -

-Author-
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CHAPTER 176

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE BEACH (1)

Ian stretched...

The sea stretched out before him. He was currently on a beach in Gangwon-do, facing the East Sea. Ian had been stuck in his house all day playing Elder Lord, so his body was a bit stiff. He'd gone on a solo trip in order to rejuvenate himself, and he'd picked this place because he missed the sea. Just looking at the blue sea made him feel better. He stretched his body and took in the fresh air. The sunshine was also pleasant.

"You have to tilt your upper body. You shouldn't bow. Don't touch the board."

On one side of the beach, a surf class was in session. Brightly dressed men and women were repeatedly lying down and standing up on the surfboard. It seemed moderately amusing.

Surfing... Ian should learn it once. He had never learned any sports apart from martial arts. Turning his gaze away, Ian saw surfers splashing in the water. Most of them weren't able to stand properly, but they didn't get tired, and some managed to slip nicely towards the beach.

"I don't like the rashguards."

Ian turned his head as he unexpectedly heard a voice. A man was standing there. He wore glasses, and his hair was strangely gray. However, he didn't seem old. In fact, he was in his mid-30s.

As he stared into the sun, the man spoke with furrowed brows, "It is annoying. People should go into the sea with bare skin. That is real. But the clothing companies make all these things, and they cover up their body unnecessarily. Youth is just a fleeting moment. Don't you think so?"

The man looked at Ian. It was the first time they'd met.

Ian started laughing. "That's right."

This might be the attraction of traveling. He had accidentally met an interesting person.

The man nodded. "Take your clothes off. The sun should see you."

Then the person in question took off his coat, revealing a body without any obvious fat. He was wearing aloha shorts. He walked forward with clear eyes.

"You."

"Huh?"

"Do you know how to surf?"

"I don't know."

"Indeed, you look like you don't know how."

Ian's eyebrows twitched. He looked like he didn't know how? What did that mean? Ian had never failed at any exercise. Even when he played with a ball during his childhood, his natural athleticism meant he could easily get the ball past his peers.

It was like Cristiano Ronaldo with a soccer ball, Stephen Curry with a basketball, and Roger Federer with a tennis ball. They were different. Although it was true that Ian didn't know anything about surfing, it was unacceptable to be seen as a desk-bound person.

The man didn't sense Ian's anger as he spoke casually, "Then do you want to learn from me?"

Ian made a questioning sound and laughed. "You can surf?"

"Didn't I say it? This friend, you should learn how to look at people." The man draped his jacket around his neck. "Follow me. I'll teach you one on one. This opportunity isn't common."

Ian was interested... in surfing, as well as this person. The man left the white sand with Ian and headed to the surf store across the road. There was a man with a suntanned body and a reggae hairstyle sitting on a rocking chair. He raised his sunglasses to his head and waved. The eyes behind the sunglasses were unexpectedly innocent.

“Hey, Hyung-nim.”

“You look good.”

“Hah, I was active until dawn...”

“I’m teaching him how to surf, so please give me a few things.”

“I understand. Jinchul! Get me one set of equipment! One set!”

“Yes!”

An answer called out from inside. Then a charming young man appeared. He greeted Ian with blurry eyes as if he had also been awake until dawn.

“Ah, hello. It must be your first time.”

“Yes.”

“Do you want separate clothing or rashguards? If not, there is this suit. Your height is similar to me, so the size should be...”

Ian received a full body suit which appeared to be used for scuba diving. Then when Ian tried to pay for the rental, he was rejected.

“This is fine. Hyung-nim’s guests always receive it for free.”

Ian looked at the man outside the store and the store owner. The man outside was looking at the sea with his hands behind his back.

He asked, “What is that person like?”

“Hyung-nim? I have no idea.” The young man laughed. “He is just close to the boss. Shouldn’t you know?”

“We met for the first time today.”

“Really? How strange. Well, it is like this. You can change inside.”

Ian put on the equipment, received a big surfboard, and exited the store. Ian’s board

was thick and felt like a sponge, while the man's was nice and waxy.

"This surfing equipment sucks."

"It isn't good?"

"That isn't the main part. Surfing is. It's cool."

The man said before looking at Ian. Ian jumped with surprise. The man now had blue makeup on his face which drew across his cheekbones and nose. It was like seeing the battle makeup barbarians wore in movies.

"What is it? Do you want some?" The man handed the tube to Ian. It was sunscreen. Unlike other clear sunscreens, this one had a vivid color. "Just put it on your nose. It is expensive, so I am saving it."

Surfers seemed to pursue their own beauty, so Ian tried it as well. Thus, they headed towards the sandy white beach.

"We can only surf in this area, so be careful."

A separate surfing area was designated on the beach. They headed there. In addition to them, there were other people receiving surfing lessons. Most of the people on the surfboards weren't able to ride the waves properly and hung on like seaweed.

"I am harsh, so you should be prepared."



Unlike his harsh words, the man was a really shabby teacher. He just said that Ian had to move his arms on the board and get up. Then he demonstrated once or twice before immediately pushing Ian into the sea.

Ian couldn't even practice and had to try it out on the waves. Of course, that was enough. Ian did well with his natural athleticism. He waited for the waves before gently getting up at the right time. Then he balanced himself.

Ian was satisfied. He was like Ronaldo with a soccer ball, Curry with a basketball, and Federer with a tennis ball. Now, he took on the board... like Phelps with swimming.

“Well done.”

The man spoke. Ian replied, “You are really good.”

The man was skillfully riding the waves. His hair barely got wet, unlike most of the people who couldn’t ride or balance.

“Kyaak!”

During a moment of waiting, a woman slipped on her surfboard and slid towards Ian. Her board hit Ian’s back...

And he was pushed by it.

Ian and the woman tangled together, and the two of them fell below the surface of the water. They struggled for a moment before reaching the surface. The woman with wet hair apologized to Ian,

“Wah! I’m sorry. Are you okay? I’m so sorry.”

Ian touched his back. It was fortunate that the woman’s board was for beginners. So, this was why they used a sponge-like material. If it were the board, which the man teaching Ian had, that hit him, his flesh would’ve been torn.

Ian smiled as he touched his back.

“I’m fine. Please be careful.”

“Ah...” The woman was speechless at Ian’s gentle reaction. Then she grabbed Ian’s arm as he moved away. “Are you sure you’re okay? That would’ve hurt. What can I do?”

“It’s okay.”

“I’m really sorry.”

Ian shrugged, saying that it was okay. Then the woman grabbed her board and said,

“Please tell me if you get any problems later on.”

“I will.”

“If you need a number...”

“No. It’s really fine. Have fun surfing.”

“Ah, yes. You too.”

The woman bowed and pushed her board towards the other side of the beach.

“You didn’t notice.”

Ian flinched. The man had approached.

“You surprised me,” Ian said.

“No. You noticed.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Look.” The man shouted, “Hey, you over there! Come here! What are you doing just hitting someone?”

The woman turned around in surprise at his shout. She looked at Ian and then at the man. The man beckoned and she returned.

“Girl, you were wrong.”

“Huh?”

“You shouldn’t hit people with your board. Isn’t that right?”

“That’s right. I’m sorry...”

“You are a very dangerous girl.”

“.....”

“So, give me your phone number.”

“Huh?”

“I need a phone number to contact you if there are any problems later.”

“Ah, yes. Yes. Then my number...”

She gave her number. Then he spoke to Ian, “Tell me your number as well.”

“Why?”

“Do you really not know? Quickly.”

“That...”

“Give your number to the other person so they will know it is you.”

Ian gave his number. The man repeated it a few times for the woman to remember.

“Girl, you do remember it?”

“Yes. I remember.”

“That’s great. Did you come here for a few days to play? Is it a vacation?”

“Yes, I leave the day after tomorrow.”

“This boy as well.”

The man winked. The woman laughed.

“Then I’ll be going. Have fun.”

“Yes, I’m sorry. Have fun.”

The woman smiled and pushed away on her board. The woman’s group were watching her anxiously, and she waved.

Ian laughed and asked, “What are you doing now?”

“This is youth. Eat a lot, pray a lot, and love a lot.”

“But my situation...”

“You don’t have a girlfriend?”

“.....”

“Then it’s okay.” He tapped Ian’s shoulders. “Let’s get out. I did a lot. I’m thirsty. I’ll buy you a beer.”

The man spoke informally to Ian, but Ian didn’t feel any anger towards this unknown man.

“Understood.”

Ian smiled and followed him.



They put their equipment away and found a homemade beer store not far from the beach. There were surfboards and equipment displayed inside the beer store. Surfing was famous at this beach, so it had a lot of influence.

The man ordered beer and fries for himself.

The screen in the store was showing Elder Lord.

“There was an uproar.”

The man leaned back in his chair and pointed to the screen. The headline was ‘Shocking Heaven and Earth Clan.’ It was a coverage about the Heaven and Earth Clan’s crime.

“It is a scary world. Drugs to put people into a game world.”

“Yes. Their actions have eventually come back to them.”

Ian told the Rehabilitation Brothers the information he received from Rommel. Then Edgar’s former lover, Robina, reported it to the police, and the prosecution started working with the Rehabilitation Brothers.

The ‘sleeping room’ was formerly a workshop. There, they were able to find countless people who had disappeared, and Edgar was also rescued. They had started

voluntarily for money. However, they testified that they hadn't been able to quit even if they wanted to as they were subjected to intimidation.

'Keynes' Choi Sunggil, who planned all of this, and his right-hand man, 'Luin' Kim Hyunchul, were arrested. Public opinion turned against them. The Heaven and Earth Clan turned from South Korea's pride to their disgrace. The overseas community was also shocked at this situation, and it was a rude awakening for some people.

"What happened to Rommel?"

"I don't think it will be hard to check if he participated or not."

"He was the commander? Right?"

"That's correct. The War Maestro."

"How was it? Is he like the rumors say?"

"He was definitely great..."

Ian stopped talking. He looked at the man. The man smiled at him quietly. He looked to be in his mid-30s, and the glasses gave him an intelligent air. The man's black eyes seemed to pierce through Ian.

"What did you say?"

The man chuckled.

Ian leaned back in his chair. His mind felt like a mess as he opened his mouth, "You..."

"It has arrived. Please enjoy."

At that moment, the employee served the beer, and the conversation between Ian and the man was suddenly halted. The employee put a beer down in front of both of them. There were cold water droplets on the surface of the bottle, and Ian touched it with his fingers.

Then the employee went away. Ian sipped the beer. It was cool, and he felt his mind calm down.

The man also drank his beer. Then he asked Ian, “How was Rommel, Crockta?”

CHAPTER 177

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE BEACH (2)

This man... Who was he? A chill ran down Ian's neck. However, while looking at the man's carefree face, Ian decided to drink beer instead of pursuing it.

Ian said, "He was a great commander."

The man nodded.

"Yes, he is a decent friend. He would've been the best if it wasn't for you."

"I'm not sure. He and I are different. To say who is better..."

"You're the best."

The man laughed. There was a cheering sound from the next table. Tanned men and women gathered while enjoying the music.

"Isn't the atmosphere good?"

"That's right."

The man picked up some fries and put them in his mouth. "Anyway, you are the best."

Ian looked around. It didn't feel like a suspicious situation. He drank the beer and pretended to be unconcerned.

"That reminds me, how much is a surfboard? If it is fun, I should buy one." Ian threw out some meaningless words while thinking of a few possibilities in his mind.

First of all, the man might be related to the Heaven and Earth. He might've appeared for Keynes' revenge. However, that didn't fit. No one knew Ian would come here. Additionally, this guy seemed to have already been here for a long time.

Maybe he was an acquaintance of Ji Hayeon? The game publisher might've finally figured out Crockta's identity through the Elder Lord system and informed him.

The man stared at Ian.

"How clever. But I don't like this. Just ask, who am I?"

"....."

"Not doing what the opponent expects. Did you learn that in the Middle East?"

Ian knocked at the table with his fingertips. The feeling of being caught was always unpleasant. Ian detected danger, so he tried to break the rhythm of the opponent. To do so, he always ignored what the enemy expected.

If they expected an attack, stay in place. If they expected a defense, strike forward. He didn't want to give a reaction that the opponent expected.

"How did you know?" However, this time, there wasn't enough information. So, Ian just asked him. "Who are you?"

"Look, this is how easy it is."

The man smiled and drank his beer. The two people had a light toast and looked at each other while drinking their beer.

"Eat the snack as well. Otherwise, I am the only one eating." He ordered more beer and ate the fries again. "Your presence was truly unexpected. I never expected it."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm talking about Elder Lord. I didn't expect a person like you."

At that moment, Ian realized who this person was. Ian's quiet eyes stared at the man, who looked different from the photo. The man was tanned, and his hair and eyebrows were strangely white. He had muscles, unlike his skinny appearance back then. The changes were so diverse that he never imagined it would be the face from that photo.

"Yoo Jaehan?"

"Correct."

The man closed his eyes and smiled. It was the man who made Elder Lord, the man

who developed the core system, Albino.

Ian's face stiffened. Ian had wanted to meet this man, but he couldn't figure out what to say now. Did Yoo Jaehan know about the gray god or that Elder Lord was another world? It felt like his soul was rising from his body, and he was losing his sense of reality. Maybe everything he went through was just a dream, and Elder Lord was actually just a game.

"You already know. Have you been searching for me all over the place?" Yoo Jaehan asked.

"Maybe I should've checked here."

"Yes, I suppose." Then Yoo Jaehan suddenly said, "That woman likes you a lot."

Multiple faces entered Ian's eyes, then they were erased. However, Yoo Jaehan noticed his expression and laughed.

"Who are you thinking of? Are there many people like that around you?"

"No."

"There was also that girl earlier. How sinful."

The new beer was a little different. Yoo Jaehan nodded as he drank.

"For Crockta."

The two clinked their cups together. As Ian placed his cup to his mouth and sipped, Yoo Jaehan suddenly asked, "I heard you met Albino?"

Ian's throat spasmed when he heard that, but he managed to calm down.

"Drink slowly. Don't choke."

"Cough, cough. Albino..."

"The white woman, the gray god..."

Yoo Jaehan already knew about the gray god. Ian put the beer down and calmed

himself. This was the man who made Elder Lord. It was obvious that he was related to the matter.

Yoo Jaehan was a physicist. Did he link the two worlds by joining forces with the gray god and using an unknown theory? If so, why did he make Elder Lord? What was the real purpose of the gray god?

Ian said, "I met her. I also heard that Elder Lord is another world."

Yoo Jaehan nodded. "I guess so."

"What is Elder Lord? Why did you make it, and what is the gray god's purpose?"

"If I tell you one thing..."

"You should tell me."

"I see..."

Yoo Jaehan looked upwards. He seemed to be thinking of something.

"Your name is Jung Ian?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever looked up at the night sky?" He reached out. "It is dark in Korea, but there are numerous stars in the sky. Have you ever looked up at the sky from the desert?"

"I have."

"How was it?"

"Beautiful."

"It wasn't scary?" He smiled faintly at Ian. "Isn't it scary to imagine the vast universe that stretches between the stars and us?"

"I haven't thought of that so far."

"All of them will cool down in the end." Yoo Jaehan seemed to be touching on the idea of the abyss, which had been conveyed by the gray god and the demon belt. "Entropy can't be reversed. Forever."

This also went along with Gordon's story.

"The sun, the stars, and the many galaxies in the universe will eventually cool down."

"What does that have to do with Elder Lord?"

"Albino was thinking about this before me. So, she found me and told me there was a way out. Then I helped her make Elder Lord."

"Maybe it was a good choice," he added on, muttering.

Ian looked at Yoo Jaehan and realized this genius was different from ordinary people.
"Did you create it in order to prevent the destruction of the universe?"

"Something like that."

Yoo Jaehan was afraid of a future that wouldn't happen in this life but in later generations. The idea overflowed in his head, and he couldn't think of anything else.

"How can she prevent the destruction?"

"I don't know."

"You just believed her and created Elder Lord?"

"She is a god. I could only believe it after meeting her. She used incomprehensible powers. But it is bigger than I thought."

"People think it is just a game and are killing others. Don't you feel guilty?"

Yoo Jaehan looked at Ian with calm eyes. They seemed emotionless.

"They are people who will die anyway."

"That doesn't mean they need to be killed."

“Everyone dies. They will live for less than 100 years. So, why does it matter?”

“.....”

“It is up to here. I’ve told you enough.”

“Can you stop Elder Lord...?”

“No.”

“What was Albino’s purpose?”

“Didn’t I tell you? It is up to here. The rest you can figure out yourself.”

Yoo Jaehan’s expression was firm. Ian struggled with two options: leave now; or try to make him say more. Maybe Ian could even use some force.

“I understand.” The latter was the more interesting choice, but he was no longer Raven. There were many questions he wanted to ask, but he decided to just nod. “Well, I suppose it doesn’t matter. I am thinking about doing it in moderation now.”

“Are you thinking about stopping Elder Lord?”

“I think I will soon.”

Ian recalled when he had been Crockta and received a 100% assimilation rate.

In that moment, he really had been Crockta, and his mindset had been that of an orc warrior. He had no fear. For him, even dying was an honor. He’d been willing to stand alone on the battlefield despite the risk of death. At the time, he didn’t worry about his surroundings. The most important thing was the battlefield.

However, that wasn’t the case. Yiyu was still young, and he was her guardian. Cafe Reason was also his responsibility. He couldn’t consider only himself when it came to his death.

When he disconnected and returned to being Ian, he regretted the thoughts and actions he had made when being Crockta. If he continued with Elder Lord, that would keep happening in the future. He needed to refrain from that, for Yiyu’s sake. In the end, the empire had been blocked. There was no need to get entangled with dangerous

beings or the gray god.

“I hope it can be like that.”

“By the way, you’re here. But Elder Saga Corporation has been looking for you.”

“They are bad at their jobs. Albino has also been helping.”

“Have you been here the whole time?”

“Yes. I just came to empty my head, but it was fun. The sea and the people.”

Ji Hayeon, the heir of the Myeongsong Group, was sure that Yoo Jaehan wasn’t in Korea. However, he was at a beach resort in Gangwon-do, and his body looked better than before.

Ian started laughing. “How did you know I would be here?”

“It’s a coincidence. I was also surprised.”

“Do scientists believe in coincidence?”

“You never know. The more I dig, the more amazing the world is. I believe in coincidences.”

It was difficult to believe. However, Yoo Jaehan seemed to have stayed here for a while. The people from the surf store knew him well. It was a purely impromptu idea that Ian had decided to go here, so it was a coincidence they met. Ian decided to be convinced.

Yoo Jaehan rose from his seat.

“Let’s go.”

“Where to...”

“This is a vacation. Go out and enjoy it.”

They left the store. It was summer, so the days were long. There was still a dim light coming from the sky.

“Call that girl.”

“Girl?”

“The girl who hit you during the day.”

“I don’t want to. I don’t even remember her number.”

“I do.” Yoo Jaehan grabbed his phone. Ian stopped smiling as Yoo Jaehan entered the number and hit the call button.

“What are you doing?”

“A follow-up.”

“It is okay. By the way, do you really remember it?”

At the time, the woman had only said her number once. On the contrary, Ian had repeated his number several times.

“I have a high IQ. I remember everything.”

“Good for you.”

“It is. A man shouldn’t be shy. Otherwise, how will you be popular?”

“That isn’t the problem...”

Suddenly, Ian’s phone rang. It was a familiar number.

Yoo Jaehan laughed. “Women are more active in this world.”



Yoo Jaehan lay on the hammock and stared at the sea as he waited for Ian to return to his accommodations. The lights from ships shone on the horizon as the sea breeze blew.

Yoo Jaehan shook his body on the hammock and felt the rhythm. He closed his eyes and whispered,

“Did you send him?”

There was no answer. Yoo Jaehan asked again, “Albino, did you send him?”

“It’s a coincidence.”

He opened his eyes. There was a fuzzy shape by his side.

“He decided to come by himself.”

“You helped him make that decision. Using your power, you can project any image into his imagination. No?”

“.....”

“I haven’t seen you in a while.”

The white, fuzzy shape revolved around him and said, “It will be soon.”

“So soon?”

“It will be soon thanks to Ian.”

“He doesn’t know anything, but he is helping you.”

“It is an inevitable flow.”

Yoo Jaehan got up from the hammock and stared up at the sky. There weren’t many stars at the beach. Still, he could imagine the vast landscape beyond it.

“Keep your promise.” He demanded.

“I think you are insane.”

“I am a genius.”

Ian appeared in the distance. Yoo Jaehan waved towards the distant Ian, and the blurry cloud hid behind Yoo Jaehan. Her image disappeared within a short time.

He could feel her disappearing and muttered, “Geniuses are never sane.”

Then Yoo Jaehan's eyes narrowed. Ian neared him, but Ian wasn't coming alone. A woman was with him.

"Is this youth?"

CHAPTER 178

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE BEACH (3)

The woman Ian brought was of a similar age to Yoo Jaehan. Yoo Jaehan subtly looked her up and down. He felt like something was wrong.

“This is it.”

“Is it this person?” She asked.

Yoo Jaehan looked at Ian and laughed, “What is this?”

“What about it? Eat a lot, pray a lot, and love a lot.” Ian laughed. “I found someone for Doctor-nim.”

“No, why didn’t you ask me?”

“I didn’t intend for it originally.”

Ian grinned and spoke to the woman, “Noona, he is handsome, intelligent, and a good surfer.”

“I can’t see that...”

“His mind is very good. He is a Mensa member.”

“Oh, my god. Really? His mind does seem nice.”

Yoo Jaehan instantly shook his head, “Mensa is just a mega society. It is a group that anyone can enter.”

“Mensa?”

“Hahaha. How about it? He is clever.” Ian laughed.

She replied, “I came here, but I still don’t believe it. Will you take responsibility?”

“Why are you already like this? Talk together for a little bit more. However, I will take

responsibility. This person is gentle inside and out. He is a genius who remembers everything. Isn't he great?"

Ian moved her to sit beside Yoo Jaehan. The woman shrugged like she was still unsure if she was interested, but she started talking to Yoo Jaehan.

She was the guest staying in the room next door to Ian at the hotel. They had encountered each other outside their rooms and started chatting. As she was a similar age to Yoo Jaehan and bored being by herself, he said he would introduce her to a nice man. The woman followed because deep down she was interested in Ian, but a genius had his own charm.

"Have fun."

Ian slipped away. The wall broke down slowly, and Yoo Jaehan and the woman laughed as they exchanged a few words.

Ian grinned. He had wondered about what type of person the genius Yoo Jaehan was, but he seemed more free and easy than Ian had thought. Ian had thought about letting Ji Hayeon know, but it was better to hide his available resources.

"What should I do?"

Ian walked alone on the beach at night. It was night, so the atmosphere was cool. Exotic bars were lit up along every street, and the food trucks parked in the streets sold a variety of food. Ian bought an American-style chili hot dog. He also received a cup of beer. It was delicious. The beer was a domestic brand, but it wasn't bad.

He walked around the beach with food in his hands and sometimes saw youths who had bought firecrackers. Here and there, people were laughing. There were young people busking, playing musical instruments, singing and dancing.

Somehow, it all seemed distant. It felt like a type of world which he couldn't join. Ian was a similar age to them, but he was more accustomed to pointing a muzzle at an enemy's head than playing music or having other talents.

"You should enjoy life..." Ian's boss had said this when Ian was discharged. How had Ian looked at that time?

However, now he enjoyed it enough. Was there anything as joyful as being Crockta?

“.....!”

At that moment, Ian recoiled. A face he had seen many times belonged to a person sitting at a BBQ party on the beach. This was a face that shouldn't be here. It was a person with green skin, rough eyes, a heinous face, and a red headband.

“C-Crockta...?”

The person was Crockta. Ian froze in confusion, but when he looked closely, he saw that Crockta wasn't the only one. There were various faces next to him, such as the popular pokemon, Pikachu. They were masks to be pulled down over the head.

People laughed as they moved. Ian couldn't help laughing. When did these products come out?

“I should be paid royalties.” He muttered as he kept staring.

The people were laughing as meat cooked on the open air barbecue grill. Then suddenly, someone waved at Ian. The face was familiar. It was the woman who hit Ian during the day. He couldn't ignore her due to her intense gaze.

“What are you doing alone?”

“Nothing. Well...” He looked down at the hot dog and beer in his hands. “I am walking alone.”

“Ah, so you came to the beach. It must be lonely. Is your body okay?”

“It's okay.”

Her face was already red from the alcohol.

The people sitting with her wondered who he was. When she told them that Ian was the person she hit during the day, they welcomed him with strange eyes. It seemed like they had already talked about Ian.

On the other hand, the men were looking at Ian with appraising eyes. The man wearing the Crockta mask took it off. He was a young man.

He asked, “Do you know this person?”

“Kind of.”

“I’m sorry, but only our guests are able to attend. The amount is fixed.”

It seemed to be a BBQ party for people staying at a guesthouse. Ian had no intention of attending, so he shook his head.

“He was injured because of me, so can’t it be allowed just this once? It is okay for one person.”

“Please, Oppa!”

“I was really looking forward to seeing him!”

The young man was troubled because he couldn’t ignore a bunch of girls.

“I understand. Please have a drink.”

As the young man working at the guesthouse soon realized the atmosphere, he quickly handed Ian a drink. Ian tried to refuse. However, the idea of enjoying life suddenly flashed through his mind again. Sometimes, it wasn’t so bad to participate in things like this.

Ian received a cup.

The people were from all over the country. The young man wearing the mask had come because the boss had asked for his help. Meanwhile, the rest were office workers, university students, and young men just about to go to military service.

Ian asked, “Where did you get that mask?”

“I bought it on the Internet. Do you know about Crockta?”

“I know.”

“I’m a fan.”

Everybody was drunk, and their intentions could be seen in their eyes. There were people hitting on those they liked. The guesthouse employee was interested in the woman called Jieun, and Jieun was interested in Ian.

Ian smiled wryly as he was sandwiched between the two of them.

"I think I should go now."

"Where?"

"I'm tired, so I'm going to sleep."

"Are you going to sleep already?" As Ian left, the man felt sorry as well as glad, so he didn't try to stop it. "It can't be helped if you are tired."

Ian said thanks and rose from his seat after finishing his drink. Anyway, everyone was so drunk that they wouldn't remember him.

He walked around for a while after leaving the beach. In fact, he wanted to be left alone. This time alone was needed. Ian looked at the distant lights in the sea and thought about Elder Lord and Yoo Jaehan.

He asked himself why these things happened. It was almost like someone had given Ian a mission. Strange things would keep happening to him in the world of Elder Lord.

Yoo Jaehan... Ian went on a trip, met Yoo Jaehan, and heard about Elder Lord. Elder Lord seemed to be born from some strange idea about reversing entropy, and the grey god seemed to be yearning for it.



He felt the sea breeze one more time before deciding to return to his hotel.

"....."

Ian witnessed a suspicious sight. The guesthouse members at the BBQ party were either still partying or had returned separately to sleep. However, the man who wore the Crockta mask was supporting the woman called Jieun and heading somewhere else.

She seemed drunk and dazed, while the man was leading her somewhere. It was in the direction where the bright lights of a motel flashed.

"Ah, really."

Ian bit his lips. Where were her friends? He didn't know, but they seemed swept up by the atmosphere and didn't pay attention to her. The man's hand was busy moving in the direction of her waist.

Ian went up to them. "Excuse me."

The man looked angrily at Ian. Jieun hadn't recovered yet and was leaning weakly against the man. She occasionally muttered nonsense.

Ian spoke softly, "Just take her back to the guesthouse."

The man looked around for a moment and saw it was just them. Then the man's face distorted as he replied angrily, "What is it? Are you her boyfriend?"

He had dropped all honorifics. Ian smiled bitterly.

"You shouldn't take advantage of a drunk person. It is fine if you listen to my proposal."

"Don't interfere in my business. Why are you meddling?"

The man placed Jieun on the ground and approached Ian. He had a good physical appearance, and he was tall, so he looked down at Ian.

"Why did you have to meddle in my business?"

Ian thought about it. The man's words... Ian wasn't a good person to meddle in other people's business. When he looked back at his past, he would shrug rather than meddle with other people's problems.

However, he couldn't just walk on by now.

"So, listen well."

"What?"

"Maybe if you hadn't used that mask..." Ian muttered. "Crockta is exactly why I..."

Ian stretched out his hand at a speed was so fast that the man couldn't respond. The man's balance was disturbed...

Kung.

And he fell on his back.

“Ack!”

Ian shook his hand.

“You can’t pass.”

The man held his back and rolled around on the ground. Ian had done it gently, but the man seemed to be shocked. Ian ignored him and went to the woman called Jieun.

“Are you okay? Can you stand?”

She was sitting down and dozing off. Ian sighed inwardly. He had to call the police or find one of her friends.

“You bastard...” In the meantime, the man stood up and ran forward with a red face.

Ian said, “Just lie down.”

“I’m going to kill you!”

He rushed towards Ian. It was a posture which showed he had some training. Powerful punching and kicking followed. If the opponent were an ordinary person, he wouldn’t be able to resist the attack of this trained person.

However, the opponent was Ian. The man collapsed after being hit in the solar plexus, and Ian kicked his side. The man couldn’t breathe and curled up. Ian kicked the man’s belly one more time.

“Don’t ever wear Crockta’s mask again, or I will kill you.”

Ian looked down at the man as he warned. Suddenly, he saw the woman’s friends in the distance. They were looking for her.

Ian waved his hand.



“Boss-nim.”

“Huh?”

“Did you enjoy your trip?” Han Yeori asked as she watched Ian.

“I did.”

“Really?” She narrowed her eyes. “You haven’t let go of your phone since you returned.”

Ian hesitated. Then he started typing on his phone again.

“It’s not like that.”

“Hrmm...”

Han Yeori stared at Ian from where she was wiping the tables. Ian hurried to finish the message and pressed the send button.

Since traveling to Gangwon-do, the number of people in his messenger had increased by two. There was the woman called Jieun, whom Ian had rescued. To be exact, she was Han Jieun. Why was he in contact with her? She seemed to have a crush on Ian after he rescued her from the dangerous situation.

A new message appeared.

[It is quiet. Aren’t you playing Elder Lord today?]

Yoo Jaehan...

The other new person was Yoo Jaehan. The genius scientist and creator of Elder Lord whom the Myeongsong Group was chasing. Yoo Jaehan had become close friends with Ian. Ian couldn’t help smiling as he remembered Yoo Jaehan’s unique tone.

[You should watch the broadcast.]

[I’m looking forward to it.]

More messages were exchanged. Ian rested for a while, and now he was returning to Elder Lord to meet Tiyo and Anor.

Han Yeori frowned as she saw Ian smiling at his phone. "Annoying."

".....?"

Ian's eyes widened at the irritation which he rarely saw from Han Yeori.

Han Yeori shrugged. "What? Don't bother me for the rest of the day."

Then she went to wipe the other tables. Ian scratched his head as he gazed at her.

CHAPTER 179

HEDOR'S LEGACY (1)

“Something is wrong.”

“Yes, we can’t stay still.”

“Gather the magicians. What about you?”

“My job has ended.”

“Let us begin as soon as possible. Time is running out.”

“Right.”



Katalu had changed during Crockta’s absence. The preparations for war had disappeared, and it seemed to revive into a lively city.

Crockta walked through the bustling market with Tiyo, then he found a store and slowed down. It was a vegetable store. Old memories suddenly popped into his head. At one time, he had sold vegetables. He had helped Stella sell vegetables in Anail.

“That man, he is fairly good.”

“He can sell a fireplace to people in the desert *dot*.”

The vegetable seller was brilliant at dealing with customers. He stopped the guests, formed an affinity with them, and sold them a handful of vegetables. As Crockta and Tiyo were admiring his skills, there was a sudden commotion.

“Look, I don’t eat vegetables.” A man stood in front of the vegetable store, playing with the vegetables while laughing. “We aren’t herbivores. Do you think eating vegetables can make you strong?”

The man raised his arms and showed off his biceps. The muscles of his right arm

bulged out.

"You can become strong like me by eating meat."

The demonstration of his body stopped the crowd. The burly man shrugged and laughed at the vegetable seller. "Look, Mister Vegetable Seller, are you going to collapse right now? You are as skinny as a dried anchovy. Eating vegetables have weakened you."

"Meat is good, but you need to eat a balanced meal for nutrition..."

"Balanced, balanced! I am tired of hearing this! I grew up hearing that I would be taller if I eat bean sprouts and stronger if I eat spinach! But then I was incredibly weak! Everything is a lie!"

As he screamed, a few customers turned away from the vegetable store. The vegetable seller's expression turned grouchy.

"You should talk about this somewhere else..."

"Eat meat! Chicken breast! Pork sirloin! Pork tenderloin! Pork forelock! Beef if you are rich! That is how our muscles develop!"

He took off his top and posed again. The man had good muscles.

"That... Amazing."

"Oh my, oh my, look."

The men in the market were amazed by the muscles, while the women covered their eyes and peeked through their fingers.

The man smiled and shouted, "If you want to be like me, come to Arnold's Butchery!"

".....!"

It was an explicit publicity stunt! Crockta realized something. This person was almost certainly employed by Arnold's Butchery. The man deceived people with his good muscles. Why else would he discuss here while showing off his chest, triceps, and biceps!

The customers at the vegetable store turned away one by one. Then they asked the man, "Where is Arnold's Butchery?"

"Hahat! Arnold's butcher store can be found on the right side if you turn left at that corner! There is a discount for the pork tenderloin today!"

The atmosphere was already in his favor. People decided that today's dinner menu was going to be meat. The vegetable seller's head drooped down.

"It is sophistry... Without vegetables... people can't live...!" However, his voice didn't reach the people.

Crockta looked at him and closed his eyes. Obviously, meat and proteins were important. However, the value of vegetables couldn't be discounted. Proteins were important, but the vitamins, antioxidants, and anti-cancer compounds as well as various minerals and phytochemicals were essential for the body's health.

Crockta opened his eyes and stepped forward.

".....!"

The people were surprised at the sudden emergence of an orc warrior. The muscular man posing flinched as well. Who didn't know of Crockta, the true hero who saved Katalu?!

Crockta looked at the muscular man with sunken eyes. The man winced and hopelessly maintained his pose. The muscular man looked like a dwarf once Crockta stood next to him.

He awkwardly smiled at Crockta. "Hahaha, it is Crockta. Your body is also good. Crockta eats a lot of meat right? Hahat! Take a look at these muscles! You must eat three chicken breasts every meal! Kelkelkel! Crockta as well!"

Crockta didn't answer. A person's beliefs weren't shown through words but actions.

Crockta spoke to the vegetable seller, "Hey"

The vegetable seller stuttered with confusion, "Y-Yes?"

"The spinach, how much is it?" Crockta grinned. "I would like to buy some."

“.....!”

Spinach....! It was rated as one of the top 10 superfoods in the world. He might have a rough green body, but he was devoted to eating spinach since it had various beneficial properties. Crockta declared that he would buy it all. The marketplace became noisy.

Then Crockta said, “Hey, inflatable muscles.”

“.....!”

The man’s face turned blue. ‘Inflatable muscles’ was an unbearable insult to him.

“Look.”

Crockta gave strength to his arm...

And it swelled greatly.

“This is the ultimate compression muscle.”

Cries of admiration emerged from the crowd. If the compressed muscles were so big, what were the decompressed muscles like? The man wanted to protest that Crockta’s muscles were inflated, but the atmosphere was also on Crockta’s side.

No, Crockta’s compressed muscles were bigger than the man’s.

Crockta stated, “Meat is definitely important. However, you aren’t a real muscle man if you don’t know the value of vegetables.”

“T-That...!”

“Tell me, what did you eat this morning?”

“That...”

The man didn’t answer. Crockta demanded harshly,

“Tell me!”

“.....!”

“Your body doesn’t lie! What did you eat this morning?”

The man gulped at Crockta’s push. Crockta stared at him. Confronted with the gazes of Crockta and the crowd staring at him, the silent man was forced to open his mouth.

He gritted his teeth and replied, “Of course, it is chicken breast...”

“And?”

“.....”

Crockta looked down at him and asked, “What else did you eat?”

The man lowered his head. Then he spoke in a small voice, “Boiled sweet potato...”

“.....!”

The people were shocked, but Crockta didn’t stop there.

“And?”

“Kuock...”

“What else did you eat?”

“Cabbage salad with tomatoes and blackberries...”

Sweet potatoes, cabbages, tomatoes, and blackberries! He didn’t hate vegetables!

As a man who loved physical beauty, he knew the importance of a balanced diet. He used his body to be hired by Arnold’s Butchery, deceiving people for publicity and preaching false beliefs. However, before Crockta’s questioning and doubts, he had to tell the truth.

“That’s right. Say it again. Do vegetables not matter?”

“Vegetables...”

Crockta urged him on, “Aren’t they really important?”

The man decided to admit defeat. He couldn't fool himself any longer.

"They are important...!"

He finally revealed his heart. Vegetables... They were important.

The man's head drooped down. It was a declaration of defeat.

Clap. Clap. Clap.

The people watching the spectacle started to clap and chant Crockta's name. Crockta had preserved the honor of vegetables.

"Kuock..."

The man looked down with shame. He was embarrassed about deceiving himself for money. Since this happened, he wouldn't be paid by Arnold anymore. The man had become someone who didn't have money nor honor. He fell into shame.

Suddenly, a thick hand grabbed his shoulder. It was Crockta.

Crockta spoke with a merciful face, "Hey."

"....."

"It was a joke. You have very nice muscles."

".....!"

The man looked at Crockta with quivering eyes. Crockta's expression was warm as he genuinely admired the man's body.

"I previously called you inflatable muscles..."

"I said I didn't need vegetables."

Crockta showed off his tough biceps and said, "Next time, let's lift weights together."

The man received Crockta's recognition...! Crockta recognized the time and effort he'd put into building his muscles. The man was filled with great emotions, and he touched

his nose, shrugging in a show of bravado.

"My training is harsh. It is hell training."

"Right. That is natural."

"....."

"You must've overcome hard times."

The man was overwhelmed. They weren't just comforting words because Crockta truly understood. Crockta reached out his hand, and the man responded. The two men embraced. The two muscular men forgave each other's mistakes.

Then people flocked to the vegetable store. The vegetable store was recognized by Crockta!

Having a healthy body which could live a long time was people's dream. The people who saw such a future bought the vegetables from this store. Like this, the vegetable store became well-known because of Crockta.

The muscle man restored his courage and spoke to Tiyo, who was standing quietly beside Crockta.

"Tiyo as well. You should buy some vegetables. How can you accompany Crockta with a body like that? Kelkelkel!"

"Kulkulkul, kulkulkul!"

Crockta laughed together with the man.

Tiyo frowned.

"What did you say *dot!*"

"You should gain some muscles. Kelkelkel!"

"That's right. Kulkulkulkul!"

"Kelkelkelkel!"

The two muscular men laughed at Tiyo, while Tiyo's eyebrows twitched. His gnome's pride couldn't allow this. Tiyo jumped forward.

"Achu!"

He spun like a spinning top and kicked. They were lightning fast strikes aimed at Crockta's and the man's jaws. Crockta barely escaped, but the man failed and was hit in the jaw. It was only a light hit, but the man swayed and sat down. The man couldn't easily recover from the damage and sat for a while.

"Uhhh..."

"Look, inflatable muscles dot! This is the truly ultimate compression muscle dot!"

Tiyo took off his top...

And his upper body was revealed. His body contained tight muscles, with no signs of fat anywhere. It was reminiscent of Bruce Lee. While wearing clothes, he looked like a child, but once they were thrown off, dense and compact muscles were revealed. It was a perfect and slim figure that wasn't lacking in anything.

"This...!"

"Beautiful...!"

People admired him. The vegetable seller also clapped.

"Watching Tiyo, I am reminded of a gnome that I knew before."

"What *dot*? There was another wonderful gnome *dot*?"

"That's right. The gnome loved eating spinach when he stayed in Katalu. His body was as dazzling as Tiyo's." The vegetable seller's gaze became distant. "His name was Hedor! A cool gnome."

".....!"

"...Hedor!"

Crockta and Tiyo's eyes widened.

Hedor. It was Tiyo's father, whom they were looking for. They got a clue about Hedor at the vegetable store.



Crockta's popularity meant there were fans and followers tracking his every move. The movements were often ordinary, but Crockta didn't avoid or tell them off. This was the reason why...

"You came because you want a nice body..."

"Yes."

Baek Hanho was troubled as the number of people joining his gym increased. More members was a good thing. However, most of them said strange things during the first consultation.

Baek Hanho looked at the form submitted by the applicants and sighed.

"Yes, I would like the same ultimate muscles as Tiyo."

"That's right!"

"There is someone who wants muscles like Crockta?"

"Yes. I want to become stronger like Crockta!"

The three men sitting side by side looked at Baek Hanho with firm eyes. The remaining silent person suddenly said, "I want to be like the butcher shop meat man. I don't have unrealistic goals like them."

The man who interfered with the vegetable seller's business was known on the Internet as the butcher shop meat man. His meat praising character was surprisingly popular, and there were those who started exercising with the goal of being like him.

The new muscular craze...

Crockta's popularity led to trends in reality.

"....."

Baek Hanho hit his forehead with his pen. He thought for a moment before opening his mouth.

“Hrmm... What about a body like Andre’s?”

“Andre?”

They shook their heads in unison.

“Aish. What is Andre?”

“He is too strange.”

“Crockta is the trend. Andre, yuck.”

Baek Hanho nodded. “Right. Today, let’s start straight away. Change your clothes.”

“Huh? We were going to start tomorrow...”

“I have an appointment...”

“Shut up. He who lives for tomorrow won’t be able to defeat his enemies today! Take it off right now!” Baek Hanho’s eyes blazed passionately. “I’ll make those bodies... through hell training.”

CHAPTER 180

HEDOR'S LEGACY (2)

Thanks to Crockta, the vegetable seller finished early and invited them inside the store. They were seated to have a meal. The vegetable seller told them to wait and left for a while. Then he soon returned carrying a large pot.

It was vegetable stew. The flavor of the broth was abundant. There was some meat included, but it was mainly made of vegetables. Crockta and Tiyo originally enjoyed meat, but their spoons moved quickly due to the delicious taste of the vegetables.

“...By the way, why is he sitting here?”

“Hum hum, you shouldn’t hold grudges.”

“A man who interferes in business is shameless *dot*.”

“It is a thing of the past. Kelkelkel!”

The man who promoted the Arnold’s Butchery was also with them.

The vegetable seller just laughed at their argument and replied, “Vegetables are from the ground, from Mother Nature. A mother doesn’t discriminate against her children.”

“.....!”

His warm words caused the gaze in Crockta’s and Tiyo’s eyes to grow colder. The muscular man had actually tried to harass such a good person. The macho man scratched his head and avoided their gazes. The vegetable seller didn’t care and gave him plenty of vegetable soup.

“At any rate, I am surprised that Tiyo is Hedor’s son. This is a fated relationship.”

“When did you see my father *dot*? ”

“It was a year ago.”

“It has been a long time *dot...*”

“Hedor was looking for something.”

“That’s right *dot...*”

Tiyo nodded. Hedor had an explorer’s temperament and always sought new things. It wasn’t strange that he was pursuing interesting things. However, from Quantes to the north, the north to the south, and then somewhere else, what was keeping him so busy?

“What was it *dot?*”

“I don’t know the details, but it seemed to be a relic of the gods.”

“The gods.”

When talking about the gods, things like the gray god and the world tree popped into Crockta’s mind. They were powerful existences with divine power. Crockta had first met the gray god in the Temple of the Fallen Gods. It could be inferred that it was possible to meet a god in a place associated with them. Then was Hedor looking for some ruins to meet the gods?

“He came periodically to buy vegetables. He was good at self-management.”

“He came periodically *dot?* It means he stayed here for a while.”

“That’s right. He stayed for a few months.”

“Where did he go *dot?*”

“Maybe the temple.”

“Temple? Katalu has a temple *dot?*”

“Yes. It is more like a memorial than a temple, but...”

The muscular man spoke from the side, “That’s correct. It is a temple but not a temple.”

“A temple but not a temple *dot?*”

“Yes, it’s a memorial place...”

The muscular man and the vegetable seller were natives of Katalu, so they both knew the place. Crockta and Tiyo exchanged glances and nodded.

“Are you leaving straight away?”

“No.”

“No *dot*.”

Crockta and Tiyo replied at the same time.

“If it is possible, I would like one more bowl.”

“I will eat before going *dot*. This is delicious.”



Crockta and Tiyo arrived at the temple the vegetable seller had described. It was a small building on the outskirts of the city. Although this was their first time seeing it, it felt familiar to Crockta. The building’s appearance was similar to the Temple of the Fallen God. Crockta felt that this was somehow associated with the gray god.

“Why is that guy here *dot*?” Tiyo said.

Anor was standing there. The tanned skin made it obvious that he was the dark elf, Anor. There was no doubt that he was moving back and forth. He now had the dark energy of a necromancer around his body.

“Hey, Anor! What are you doing *dot*?”

“Eh?” Anor found them and waved happily. “What are you doing here? Didn’t you go to the market?”

“Something happened *dot*. What about you?”

Anor had definitely declared that he would rest all day at the inn.

“What, did you make a promise to meet a beautiful woman *dot*?”

"Hahaha. No. I just felt something from here." Anor pointed to the temple. The lights were off, and it was completely dark inside. "A familiar aura... I feel something like that."

"Hoh..." Tiyo touched his chin. "It seems like a very unpleasant place *dot*."

They approached the temple and opened the door. It was dark, but as soon as they entered, the lights came on as if it sensed their movements. There was a long corridor.

"Is anyone here?" Crockta called out. His voice echoed down the hallway. He heard there was someone managing this hallway, so where were they? Suddenly, they reached the end of the corridor. There was one more door. Crockta hesitated, but Tiyo opened the door without hesitation.

Kkiiik.

The door opened... And there was a woman sitting down.

"No *dot*...."

"What a surprise."

The woman didn't move from the noise. It was only the rear view, but she showed a holy appearance. The inner murals surrounding her created a strange atmosphere, somewhat like the one in the Temple of the Fallen God. They made a lot of noise on their way in, but the woman was still in her own world, completely motionless.

Crockta's group stood in the doorway and watched her for a while. After some time, the woman started to slowly rise.

"Ack..."

At that moment, the woman stumbled. It seemed that she had been sitting for a long time. She frowned and twisted on the ground, groaning. Crockta withdrew his previous assessment. She wasn't a sacred being, just a person.

The woman finally got up. "Phew, I thought I was going to die."

Then she spoke to Crockta's party, "Welcome. I'm sorry for the delay. You must've been waiting for a long time."

Crockta greeted her. "No. We didn't want to interfere in your praying..."

"Huh? Praying?" She asked.

"You weren't praying?"

"Then you were just sitting there..."

"Oh, I was doing yoga and got a cramp..."

"....."

She clapped and the interior lit up a bit more.

"This..."

"Isn't it amazing? A friend of mine made it."

Tiyo was convinced that her friend was Hedor as this was magic engineering.

"Oh, my?" She saw Tiyo and suddenly covered her mouth. It was an expression of enlightenment. "Perhaps..."

"That's right *dot*." Tiyo nodded. "I am Hedor's son, Tiyo!"

"Unbelievable..." She looked down at Tiyo with admiration. "You look very similar."

"Do you know my father *dot*?"

"Of course. You have the same rude way of talking."

"What *dot*...?"

"Hahat, I'm just joking."

Crockta explained on behalf of the shocked Tiyo.

"We are looking for Hedor. Do you know anything about him?"

"He had to leave... Please follow me."

She guided them somewhere. It was a small sitting room. The woman brought out some tea. She nodded after they explained their purpose for coming here. The woman did indeed know about Hedor.

“He’s a curious person and was investigating a god who is no longer in this world.”

“The fallen god?”

“Gosh, you already know. That’s right. That is what she is called.”

Crockta gulped at the words. Strangely, the gray god was mentioned again here. Since Crockta’s assimilation reached 100, the gray god no longer talked to him, and he didn’t receive any system messages. What did the gray god really want, and what was Hedor looking for?

“Then is this the Temple of the Fallen God?” Crockta asked. She shook her head.

“No. The Temple of the Fallen God no longer exists. They are all in ruins.”

There was a temple in the north, but she didn’t know about it.

“Additionally, this place isn’t strictly a temple.”

“Then?”

“It is a memorial place.”

“For what? And you...?”

“I...” Her answer was unexpected. “I am Eliza, a follower of the goddess of mercy.”

“The goddess of mercy...?”

Eliza smiled. “I came here following the Goddess of Mercy’s will, in order to remember a species that has now disappeared from the continent.”

“A species that has disappeared from the continent *dot*?” Tiyo was confused. He didn’t seem to know.

“A very long time ago, there was a species that followed the fallen god before she fell.

They had a strong and mysterious power that was different from other species.”

“Mysterious power?”

“Yes, I don’t know exactly, but it is said that the other species were afraid because of the unknown power. Then the fallen god suddenly went crazy and was captivated by the strange idea of destroying the world.” Eliza sighed. “The species kept following her, despite her desire to destroy the world, and all the gods and species united to stop the fallen god. The orcs, humans, dwarves, elves, and gnomes confronted them.”

“It is the first time I’ve heard this story *dot*.”

“It is a story that the records have erased. Anyway, the power of the other gods combined, and she crashed, becoming a ‘fallen god.’”

The gray god was the god who had fallen.

Crockta asked, “That species?”

“Unfortunately, they suffered the same fate as the fallen god. They all died. Some are said to be alive, but I don’t know if this is true or not.”

Suddenly, Crockta’s waist started itching. Crockta lowered his head and saw that the steel belt at his waist seemed to be shaking strangely.

“The goddess of mercy was saddened by the fate of the species that followed the fallen god and made a memorial for them. This is the place.”

“It is a sad but interesting story.”

“But there is a positive aspect in that all the species joined together. The species will work together when there is a crisis.”

Crockta fell into deep thought as he listened to the story. The fallen god was clearly the gray god. That meant the creation of Elder Lord was an extension of that ambition. She still wanted to destroy the world.

Crockta, who had met her in person, had difficulty thinking about her as such a dangerous being. He hadn’t gotten any bad feelings from her. So, what was her reason for wanting such an ending?

Tiyo asked, "So, where did my father go *dot*?"

"He received information that the trail of the fallen god is in the west..."

Tak tak tak!

Suddenly, the footsteps were heard coming from outside.

"I will leave you with those words... Please excuse me. Come in!"

The door opened, and a man looked at Eliza. He was holding an envelope in his hand.

"Eliza. There is a letter. It seems to be urgent."

"Thank you." Eliza accepted it. Then the man bowed and left the temple. He seemed to be the mailman. "This... Please wait a moment."

She checked the outside of the envelope, immediately tore it open, and then checked the contents. Her eyes gradually widened. She frowned like she couldn't understand it. Her eyes shook as she read it again a few times.

"This..."

Eliza looked at Crockta with an intense gaze.

"Crockta."

"What happened?"

"....."

She bit her lips and spoke again,

"Um... and Tiyo."

"What *dot*?"

"The dark elf as well..."

"I am Anor."

"Yes, Anor." Eliza continued, "Hedor told me he was going to 'Geherad,' which is to the north-west of Katalu. You should go quickly."

"Geherad?"

"Yes. He said he would stay there for a while, so you should rush in order to not miss him."

"Then it is better to go quickly *dot.*" Tiyo looked at Crockta and Anor.

"We are accompanying you."

"There is no need to ask."

They nodded at each other. As they were companions, it was natural for them to accompany Tiyo.

Tiyo raised a fist. "Good *dot.* Let's start straight away!"

"Now?"

"Indeed *dot.* Katalu is safe, so we don't have to wait any longer *dot.*"

"But I wanted to take a break..."

"You can do it tomorrow *dot!* Live today!"

Tiyo declared. So, Crockta, Tiyo, and Anor headed for Geherad. After thanking Eliza, they hastily escaped the temple—no, the memorial place for the disappeared species.



Eliza sighed as they left. Did she do the right thing?

She looked at the letter again. A divine message had come down to the temple. The contents were hostile towards the orcs and Crockta's party. There were several things which didn't seem usual for the goddess of mercy.

As a follower of the goddess of mercy, she shouldn't have let them go. She should've tricked them into going to a dangerous place or drug them...

Instead, she sent them to a safe place. Geherad was a harsh place, but it was also isolated from other species and temples. If the contents of the message were true, Geherad was the best place for them.

It was a hard choice for her. However, Crockta was the hero who saved Katalu, and Tiyo... He was Hedor's son.

Eliza closed her eyes as she thought of Hedor. He was a gnome who always laughed cheerfully and had helped Eliza, a novice who had been sent to the outside world alone. His optimistic attitude had left a big impression on her. The facilities inside the temple had also been provided by Hedor.

"Hah..." Eliza sighed.

Her chest felt heavy at the thought of disobeying the goddess. Hedor's son, Tiyo, was following him. Tiyo might resent Hedor, but today, Hedor had saved his party. If it wasn't for Hedor, she might've deceived them.

She looked at the letter again. This was written:

[Make the orcs a forgotten species.]

It wasn't like the goddess of mercy. If a divine message had come down, that meant something was happening. The kingdom had become an empire, and the goddess of mercy passed on a strange message. Everything was becoming strange.

Eliza prayed for the world.

CHAPTER 181

SLAYER MAKER (1)

Crockta informed Guardi, the leader of Katalu, and quietly escaped the city. It was to get rid of the fans and users following them.

“It is like going back to the beginning.”

“Huhu, I think so as well *dot*.”

Crockta headed north to find the Temple of the Fallen God, while Tiyo wanted to find his father. It was the beginning of destiny. He'd met Anor there, fought the great chieftain, and eventually conquered the north. Next was the south. He'd met an Alaste knight there and learned about the empire's ambitions. Then he rescued the city from an army.

They had been through many things. Now, they were heading on a new path. Their goal was the west. It contained the magnificent Orcrox and Basque, as well as the mountain cities of the orcs. There were a wide variety of orcs present in unknown territory on the continent. Beyond that was Geherad.

Geherad was the ancient word for ‘last fire.’

“The last fire, is it an incredibly hot place *dot*?”

“Tsk. Think about it. It would be something figurative.”

“What do you think when you hear last fire *dot*? Heat!”

“Not that. Um... passion? A place where passionate people live?”



They walked for a long time after leaving Katalu. After heading north-east from Katalu, a great forest appeared. From there, it was a long march to Geherad.

“I see it.”

There was a small village at the entrance of the forest. It was commonly known as the 'resting area.'

"Be careful. I heard rumors that the prices are expensive *dot*."

"It's okay. Crockta is rich."

"Indeed, there is a saying that a friend's money is our money *dot*."

"...It is the first time I've heard that."

The great forest was a rough place. However, there were adventures, treasures, and magic hidden throughout. There was also a city like Geherad, where mysterious species lived. That's why adventurers who wanted to enter the forest stayed at this village for a while. They could gain equipment, information, and companions from the village. The great forest was a tough place, so it was advantageous to have as many people as possible.

There were adventurers shaking placards at the entrance of the village.

[Recruiting people to explore Darunen Dungeon.]

[Looking for people to hunt trolls.]

[Looking for an adventurer to accompany me to Seoru Academy.]

[Looking for people with courage.]

They were all gathering people. Many showed interest in Crockta's party. There was a dignified orc warrior, a gnome with a mysterious artifact, and an unknown hooded person, who gave off dark energy. They seemed strong and skillful. The adventurers waved their placards towards the party with eager eyes. Everyone was preparing to enter the forest for various purposes.

Crockta's party didn't respond and headed straight into the village. There were inns, restaurants, and equipment stores all over. Houses for residential purposes were rare.

In other words, most of the villagers were wanderers.

"We will stay the day and head off tomorrow."

"Good dot."

They didn't need another party member, so they headed straight to an inn. It cost a lot to stay for just one day. Then at that moment...

A man holding a placard was staring at them from the entrance to the inn. A bearded dwarf. He looked at Tiyo, who was a similar height to him, and then at Anor and Crockta. Then he moved his placard closer.

[Geherad.]

There was only a brief description of his destination. He was already confident they were going to the same place after hearing the conversation that went on within Crockta's group. However, his shabby appearance didn't fit that of a dwarf.

Tiyo and Anor shook their heads, while Crockta avoided eye contact. They ignored him and tried to enter the inn. Then the dwarf opened his mouth to say,

"Going to Geherad will be useless."

Crockta's party stopped walking.

The dwarf said, "The one you are looking for isn't there."

Crockta looked at the dwarf. He seemed to already know the purpose of Crockta's group. Perhaps he knew about Hedor.

Crockta asked, "What are you talking about? Do you know Hedor?"

"Hedor?" The dwarf was confused. "It is the first time I've heard that name. I don't know who he is, but he won't be enough."

The momentary conversation paused. What was the dwarf talking about? Crockta's group looked at each other. Something was strange.

Crockta spoke again, "You said that you know why we are going to Geherad..."

"Of course."

"What do you think the reason is?"

"Um...?" The dwarf seemed to have noticed something was strange as he pointed to Crockta. "Aren't you going to fix that?"

"What are you talking about? Fix?"

"You are heading to Geherad without knowing anything?" The dwarf sighed. "Foolish warrior!"

"What are you saying? Please explain."

Tiyo tugged at Crockta and Anor's sleeves.

"Ignore him *dot*. He is just a weird dwarf, a crazy dwarf."

"My mind is fine, gnome with an undignified expression!"

"What *dot*! Crazy dwarf!"

Anor gently stopped Tiyo. The dwarf sighed, "You really don't know anything. Warrior Listen carefully." He pointed to Ogre Slayer on Crockta's back. "Your weapon is on the brink of breaking."

".....!"

Crockta's eyes widened. Then he reflexively grabbed the handle of Ogre Slayer. It felt heavy in his hands. That dwarf said that Ogre Slayer was on the verge of breaking down. There was a problem with the work of the Golden Anvil Clan? Crockta couldn't believe it.

"You are a great warrior. I can feel it. You might've become stronger through many battlefields, but the sword has continued to be damaged."

He had a point. Ever since Crockta received this as a gift from Thompson in Anail, he hadn't changed weapons even once. In the meantime, he had dealt with countless monsters and enemies. A conventional weapon would've already been destroyed. However, Crockta had always taken care of Ogre Slayer and brought it to blacksmiths.

Yet a shabby dwarf was saying this to him out of nowhere, so he couldn't accept it.

"I entrusted it to a blacksmith every time a fight ended."

"Yes, you left it to a blacksmith. That is the problem."

"How come?"

"An ordinary blacksmith can't handle Ogre Slayer."

".....!"

Crockta's eyes widened. This dwarf knew that the greatsword was named Ogre Slayer.

"Who are you?"

Crockta held Ogre Slayer. The dwarf nodded fearlessly at the blade which Crockta held. There was a faint smile on his face.

"I am a craftsman of the Golden Anvil Clan, Zakiro."

He was a member of the Golden Anvil Clan. However, this wasn't the end.

"I am the one who created Ogre Slayer, the Slayer Maker."



"Your Majesty. This divine message is strange."

Duke Christian said. He was the one who had caused the emperor to become close to the Heaven and Earth Clan. He was also the one with the greatest power in the empire, maybe even more than the emperor. The kingdom could become an empire due to Duke Christian manipulating it from behind.

After the Heaven and Earth Clan disappeared, Duke Christian rarely left his estate. However, he came to Akantor after hearing news about the divine message.

"Please think carefully."

"I followed your cautious words and lost most of the troops." Akantor said

sarcastically.

However, Christian wasn't agitated. "It was Your Majesty's choice to strike Crockta."

"Are you really saying that?"

"Isn't it?"

Christian shot back. Emperor Akantor... The only person able to question him was Duke Christian.

Akantor's lips twisted as he smiled, "Yes, let's say that."

"I believe you understand my point."

"So, I should refuse the temples."

"The empire isn't a place ruled by the gods. It is only Your Majesty who can decide on war."

"You speak well."

"I have always been loyal. Please listen to me, Your Majesty."

"So, what is wrong with this? I don't know about matters regarding the gods. But this is an opportunity to get rid of Crockta who insulted the empire, as well as the dirty orcs. Does the duke think otherwise?"

Christian closed his eyes.

Of course, it was a tempting offer. In addition to the empire, all the species on the continent, including the elves and dwarves, had received this divine message. If they joined together, they could destroy the orcs without much damage. If Crockta was killed, the empire's fallen honor would be rebuilt. However, they needed to be careful.

"Mogsulin was at the fight on the plains."

"I heard he was watching from a distance."

Mogsulin was the magician who had stopped Crockta and saved Keynes. He was the

genius who was the most powerful magician in the empire, and Duke Christian's most beloved follower.

"He can borrow the power of the gods. Therefore, he has a great deal of knowledge about the gods."

"A magician who can borrow the power of the gods?"

"He has the ability to interact with them. Anyway, he felt something at that time and learned that the gods were watching Crockta."

Mogsulin had sensed a power that shouldn't be present in Crockta.

"That is why the gods are trying to kill Crockta and the orcs."

"What is that power?"

"The power of the fallen god."

"It is the first time I've heard of it."

"It is dangerous. We must be cautious as long as the power of the fallen god is involved. She is the worst being who drove the world to the brink of destruction."

Christian gazed at Akantor with serious eyes. Akantor sighed. Christian was the real power of the empire. Simultaneously, he was his mother's brother, or in other words, his uncle. His strength was manipulation, but sometimes he gave sincere advice.

"Then shouldn't we do something before the situation worsens?"

"We will have no obligation to."

"Isn't the world in danger because of Crockta and the orcs?"

"Your Majesty is still pure." Christian laughed. Akantor's face distorted. "It doesn't matter if it is dangerous. The orcs live in the northwest of the continent. The elves, dwarves, and gnomes will receive the damage first."

"....."

"Then when the time comes, the gods will come out in person. They leave troublesome things to the mortals, but once the damage is too large, they will use their power."

Akantor nodded. "The gods... It seems like a distant story."

"They are insignificant. They are merely mighty beings who call themselves gods and follow their own desires."

"So, you're saying we don't need to exhaust our strength and should just watch. If nothing happens, it is good. If the other species are damaged, it is beneficial to us."

"That's right." Christian looked at Akantor with gentle eyes. "Keep this in mind. There is no joint responsibility in this world. A battle is divided between the loser and the winner. In this case, there is no loss from not participating."

"I understand." Akantor nodded.

Once Christian thought the emperor was convinced, he bowed and left the room. Now that Akantor was alone, he rubbed his chin. Christian's words made sense. However, it was clear that Christian had failed to grasp the power of the 'gods.' The gods weren't so convenient to deal with.

Akantor muttered, "I wish it was that easy..."

CHAPTER 182

SLAYER MAKER (2)

Crockta wondered why a member of the Golden Anvil Clan would be standing here like this, but he didn't dare ask. Tiyo released his frustration as he asked, "Then why are you begging here *dot*?"

"I'm not begging, you gnome son of a bitch!"

"Do you want to experience my fist *dot*?"

Two short people with a similar height growled at each other. Zakiro was bigger than the gnome, but Tiyo didn't budge one bit. Zakiro stared at Tiyo before looking towards Crockta and saying, "At any rate, Warrior, if you continue to use Ogre Slayer like this, it will break one day."

".....!"

"Since it seems like you have been using it for a long time, it is good to get a new weapon, which is fine."

Crockta looked at Ogre Slayer. It was a weapon that fit his hands. The shape, the center of gravity, the familiar pressure in his hands, everything about Ogre Slayer was the best! But no matter how close it was to him, it was unavoidable if its retirement time was approaching. He was willing to let it go!

Crockta nodded and said, "Thank you. I will get a new weapon."

"New wine should be put in a new bottle."

"I'm envious *dot*. My General is so strong that I can't change it."

Crockta's group congratulated him. To them, equipment was disposable. Everyone received new and better equipment as time passed. Crockta's heart pounded as he anticipated the new weapon.

"Huhu, let's design a better weapon this time..."

As they tried to enter the inn with bright faces...

Zakiro hurriedly blocked them again as he said, "No, Warrior! That weapon, don't you have any affection for it?"

".....?"

"How can you just throw Ogre Slayer away!"

"A sword is just a sword, what are you talking about? It is reasonable to let it go when the time comes."

"You shouldn't be like this! Ogre Slayer will be sad!"

"I'm not a pampered person who personifies tools, Zakiro!" Crockta puffed up his chest and proclaimed, "Zakiro, keep this in mind. A weapon is a weapon, people are people! Don't give too much meaning to lifeless things. It is a fleeting impression. A warrior doesn't blame the tool or use it as an excuse."

It was a hard mindset of practical materialism!

"Only those who are weak care about such meaningless superstitions!"

Crockta didn't believe in superstitions. When he was a soldier, he saw many people giving meaning to minor things. They would tremble in fear, saying someone was cursed. This fear was a self-fulfilling prophecy, leading many people to a tragedy. So he didn't believe in such things. A sword was a sword. He only believed in himself during battle!

"Like this... a warrior with no romance..."

"Don't worry. Many of those romantic warriors have already died at my hands, and they met their weapon friends in the afterlife."

"Cough!" Zakiro dropped his head. "My sword is in the hands of such a heartless orc..."

"Kulkul, didn't you hear it from Thompson?"

At the time, Thompson had a deal with the Golden Anvil Clan. Zakiro might be Thompson's friend.

“I make weapons but I don’t care who uses them. It is my philosophy.”

“Then you didn’t know who I was?”

Zakiro looked at Crockta and laughed. “An orc warrior is holding my weapon, that is all I know. I am called the ‘Slayer Maker!’ There are many warriors who want my sword. I can’t afford to remember them one by one.”

He appeared to have his own pride as a craftsman.

Crockta nodded, “I see.”

It had nothing to do with him.

“Anyway, it was good to meet you. Then I’m going...”

“Wait!”

“Why do you keep blocking me?”

Now Zakiro was very close to the inn’s door as he blocked them.

“Anyway, this is the relationship between us so I will accompany you to Geherad.”

“We don’t need company...”

“Warrior, are you thinking of making your own weapon?” Zakiro looked at him with sad eyes. “I didn’t know you were so cold-blooded to have no affection for your weapon. I made the weapon for you and Thompson without any consideration.”

“I heard it was in return for saving your life...”

“So! Instead of the production cost! The debt will be cleared if you accompany me to Geherad.”

Zakiro was trying to get to Geherad at all cost. Crockta looked at Tiyo and Anor in turn. Tiyo’s face was saying ‘absolutely not’ while Anor had no thoughts.

“Do you know the way to Geherad?” Zakiro asked.

“There is a map.”

“A map isn’t enough when trying to get through the great forest. You guys don’t know anything about Geherad. Do you know why Geherad is called Geherad?”

“I know. It means the last fire.”

“What is the last fire?”

“I don’t know.”

“Look. You don’t know anything. I will guide you.”

“Hrmm...”

Crockta nodded. He heard there was only one road but due to the danger zones in the forest, it could be hard to find another city. Crockta replied, “I understand. Then tomorrow, meet here...”

“Cough, I should stay here with you today...”

“.....”

“The value of your weapon...”

Thus, Crockta was accompanied by Zakiro, the craftsman of the Golden Anvil Clan who made his sword.



They left early. The route to Geherad required going through several rough areas. The first thing they encountered were goblins.

“Goblins...”

“Umm...”

Crockta and Tiyo had goblins friends so they looked uncomfortable. The goblins didn’t know who their opponent was and were mocking Crockta with their typical sneering faces. One of them showed his ass and laughed.

Crockta held down his rising anger and said, "Hey, goblin friends."

The goblins understood the language to a certain extent, so they listened to Crockta's voice.

"We don't want to fight, so can't you just let us go?"

The goblins looked at each other. They discussed something and nodded. They started talking.

"Kyak kyak! Kyaak!"

One goblin stepped forward. It was the one who laughed at them and shook his ass. He bowed like he was apologizing for his rudeness.

Crockta laughed, "Huhu. It is okay, goblin friend. You are trying to make a living..."

The goblin put his hand in his pocket. Was he planning to give an apology gift? Crockta watched him. The goblin pulled out something from his pocket.

".....!"

He pushed it towards Crockta. It was nothing other than his own middle finger. Against his expectations, it wasn't a gift but an insult! Crockta's face stiffened while the goblins' laugh became louder.

"Kyak kyak kyak! Kyaak!"

"Kiyok kiyak? Kyaak! Kya kya kyak!"

"Kyaak!"

The goblins laughed and pointed towards Crockta. Then they looked around with hateful expressions. Crockta decided to forget about friendship with the goblins. Ogre Slayer shook.

"Kyaaaaak!"

The goblins felt a breeze pass by their cheeks.

Patter.

Then a hot liquid was splattered on their bodies. The goblins, who were pointing at each other and laughing at Crockta, turned their heads with blank faces. A goblin's head and body had been split apart. It was his blood that had splattered.

“Kyaaaaak!”

“Kyaak!”

The goblins stepped back in surprise. The confused goblins started to swing their shabby weapons towards Crockta. But the opponent was Crockta. He dealt with an army of the empire's elite knights alone, so the goblins couldn't hit him.

Every time the greatsword moved, a goblin would fall to the ground. The surroundings soon became filled with blood. An overwhelming slaughter!

“Hoh...”

Zakiro watched from behind and nodded. The warrior was stronger than he thought. He wasn't aware of a warrior's skills since he made weapons all day long in the Golden Anvil Clan's workshop, but this orc warrior clearly had a great talent. Ogre Slayer danced playfully in his hands.

“Not bad.”

It was a strange feeling. His sword was showing its worth in the hands of a great warrior.

His only goal when hammering metal was the finished weapon. He never thought about what his weapons would be used for once they left his possession. He thought that other craftsmen who were strict about the owners were stupid.

But now he could understand to a certain extent. How sad would it be if his sword was in the hands of a fool?

“Beautiful.”

Now Crockta had taken care of most of the goblins. The one remaining goblin trembled as he sat down and bowed to Crockta. Then he bumped his head against the ground,

asking for forgiveness.

“Kyaaakyack...”

The goblin left his forehead on the ground as he begged for mercy. The greatsword descended above his head. The goblin’s head was cut off.

“That stinger in your mouth won’t work.”

The goblin’s head had a small pipe in it, its favorite stinger.

“These goblins... Kiao is much better *dot*.”

“He is someone who transcended beyond the limits of his species.”

Tiyo shook his head as he remembered Kiao, the goblin who used spatiotemporal storm arrows at Gushantimur’s lair. Then Crockta spoke to the stupefied dwarf, “Zakiro. Let’s keep going.”

“Huh? Umm.” Zakiro regained his mind.

Anor prayed for the dead. An unknown power flowed from his hands. It was the power of the necromancer to scatter the spirits of the dead.

“Enter nirvana.”

Zakiro looked at Anor while moving after Crockta. He thought Anor was a magician or elementalist, but he was a necromancer. It was a class that he didn’t often see. A powerful warrior and a necromancer.

“What are you doing *dot*? Keep going!”

And a noisy gnome. It was a strange combination.



After repelling the goblins, they soon came across new enemies. This time it was a troll encounter, with three trolls drooling as they surrounded the group.

“Should I show my skills this time *dot*?”

Tiyo grinned while placing General on his shoulder. It was the appearance of a small gnome walking towards three trolls.

Zakiro glanced at Crockta, "Warrior, is it okay? That gnome..."

"Watch. Kulkul."

Once the fight started, Tiyo fired General indiscriminately. Zakiro thought it was a rifle made of magic engineering, but its shape changed and it emitted a lot of energy. The trolls couldn't get close and were hit by the bullets.

"That is an artifact!"

"It is said to be a dragon's legacy."

"Indeed..."

General was a dragon slayer weapon! The artifact that grew with the user was now exercising the power of its name. Now that Tiyo's strength had increased further, the magic bullets could penetrate the trolls' thick skin.

"Aaaaack!"

"Kuooh!"

They tried to repair the injured areas, but General was currently in the form of Vulcan! The trolls ended up riddled with bullets. Zakiro revised his assessment of Crockta's group. They weren't adventurers but real powerhouses.

This thought reached its climax when the party met a group of ogres.

"Ogres are easy opponents."

The territory of the ogres was often called the tomb of adventurers. They were monstrous and challenging opponents. Adventurers either escaped or die. However, Crockta easily took care of such huge monsters. As the name suggested, he slaughtered the ogres with Ogre Slayer.

The ogres screamed but the result was the same. The forest turned red every time he wielded it. Crockta moved beautifully in the heavy rain of blood, dancing with his

sword. It was an organic swordsmanship that combined attack and defense. Not long after that, all the ogres died.

Crockta grinned at Zakiro, "How is it, my skills?"

"....." Zakiro nodded. "Amazing. Really..."

When he first got the blueprints for a really big sword, he wondered if the owner could even deal with an ogre. He made the sword anyway. But he changed his mind after meeting the owner of Ogre Slayer.

He was wrong. Ogres weren't a match for this warrior.

"I did well to follow..."

He formed a fist. He wanted to pound on iron right now.

CHAPTER 183

THE LAST FIRE (1)

It had been several days since Crockta's party entered the great forest with Zakiro. The road was long and the terrain steep. If Zakiro hadn't been with them, they would've gotten lost several times. There were obstacles scattered all over the map.

"This is your cue, Anor."

"Scary... I don't want to look."

"You are the scariest person here *dot!* Raise your bones!"

"Understood."

Anor used his necromancy to defeat the monsters.

In the great forest, they fought monsters several times a day. As a result of such hardships, they were able to find a huge wall standing in the lush forest. It was the black barrier which was the symbol of Geherad.

They stood at the entrance.

"Orc, dark elf, gnome, and dwarf. How strange." The guards' eyes widened at the appearance of such unique group. The guards themselves were a mixture of humans and dwarves.

"Yes, so what did you come for?"

"To look for a per..."

"Pilgrimage." Zakiro interrupted Tiyo. "We came to worship the last fire."

"Hoh, I see."

The dwarf guards nodded.

"Are you a blacksmith?"

“Yes.”

“Do you intend to enter the last forge?”

“If it is possible.”

“Good luck.”

He chuckled. Crockta, Tiyo, and Anor, who didn’t know what the last fire or last forge was, just stood in the rear.

“Good luck. You can enter.”

The passage was clear. Just like the walls, Geherad’s buildings were made of black soil. The entire city looked like it was covered in coal.

The scale of the city wasn’t that big. After all, it would be difficult to maintain a large city in the great forest. Most of the inhabitants were dwarves and humans, while other species were occasionally seen.

However, a large building at the center of the city stood out.

“That is the resting place of the last fire.”

“What is the last fire *dot*? ”

“Coming to Geherad without even knowing...” Zakiro laughed. “The last fire literally means a fire that will remain until the end of the world. What is the longest lasting fire in the world?”

“The world’s longest lasting fire...”

Tiyo thought about it. He rolled his eyes as he tried to think of the answer.

“Let’s see...”

“Over there.”

Zakiro pointed to the sky. The sun that illuminated the world. Tiyo’s face brightened as he squinted at it.

“The sun *dot*? ”

“That’s right. Strictly speaking, the sun god.”

“It is the first time I’ve heard of the sun god *dot*. ”

“He was originally a great god, but now he is said to be in a deep sleep. I don’t know the situation of the gods, but the sun is still burning, so he hasn’t completely disappeared.”

Geherad’s ‘last fire’ was a remnant of the sun god, and the large building at the center of Geherad was the temple of the sun. Originally, the gods revealed their existence by helping out or passing on divine messages. However, the sun god didn’t do that. It was said that the sun god had fallen into a long sleep.

“Then what is the last forge?”

Zakiro grinned at Crockta’s question.

“It is literally the last forge. If the sun is the longest fire in the world, then the last forge is the place that will hold it.”

“There is a forge like that?”

“That’s right. Most people come to Geherad for that purpose. In the place where the last fire is gathered, I want to borrow the best heat to create a masterpiece. It is the holy place of the blacksmiths.”

“So, that’s why you tried to come here.”

Crockta’s group came to find Tiyo’s father, but Zakiro had such a situation.

“Well, I have now arrived. Thank you for helping me get here.” Zakiro said goodbye to them. He only accompanied them here, so it was now time to separate.

Crockta nodded and extended his fist. Zakiro smiled and bumped his fist against Crockta’s. It was the first time he had used an orc gesture, but it didn’t feel bad.

“Bul’tar. I am alive.”

“Um.”

He also said goodbye to Tiyo and Anor. Then just before he moved away, Zakiro asked Crockta,

“Warrior. I heard your name is Crockta?”

“Yes.”

He had learned this fact while accompanying them here. The name of the orc, who he had thought was just a skilled warrior, was actually Crockta. Zakiro confirmed again, “The ‘Northern Conqueror,’ Crockta.”

Crockta grinned. “Correct. I am Northern Conqueror Crockta.”

Zakiro nodded.

“...That’s right. It was an honor.”

Then he turned away.



Zakiro headed straight to the temple of the sun god, the place where the last fire was kept. In the black temple, a sharp spire stood out that pointed towards the sun.

“Northern Conqueror Crockta is using my sword...”

It wasn’t a bad feeling. Crockta’s reputation was great enough that Zakiro had heard it even back when he didn’t leave his clan’s smithy. Crockta wasn’t just strong. He also maintained the faith. Not only had he performed various activities on the continent, he had also punished the crazy chieftain and blocked the ambition of the empire.

Moreover, it had been done with Zakiro’s sword, Ogre Slayer. It felt wonderful.

“However...”

That wasn’t the only reason why Crockta’s name was engraved in his mind. Crockta would be in crisis in the near future. They were enemies who couldn’t be compared to the opponents Crockta had faced previously.

“The fickle gods...”

Despite all the work Crockta had done, the gods had sent a divine message pointing to Crockta’s death. It said to destroy Crockta and his orc kin. The dwarves in Zakiro’s hometown hurried. It was a divine message which involved the fate of the entire continent.

As long as the gods targeted Crockta, a harsh future would follow. To overcome such hardships, the sword ‘Ogre Slayer’ wasn’t appropriate. The ending was obvious.

Zakiro worried about it for a moment before shrugging it off.

“I don’t care.”

He was a blacksmith, and his mission was to create a weapon. Zakiro was merely a craftsman aiming to complete the best work. It was none of his business, even if the warrior who held his sword would eventually die because of the gods.

Zakiro stood in front of the temple and blocked everything out.

“Let’s see it once, the last fire.”

The only thing important to him now was the ‘last forge’



After separating from Zakiro, Crockta’s party explored the city for traces of Hedor. They asked if anyone knew a gnome called Hedor, but there were no answers. Some people remembered small gnomes but didn’t know much about them.

In the end, the sun set.

“That’s it for today.” Crockta stated. He was hungry and tired.

“We should go to the temple of the sun god as our final destination today. There might be a clue there.”

“I think so as well *dot*.”

“Okay. Let’s go quickly.”

They headed to the black building at the center of Geherad. As Zakiro said, all visitors to Geherad were aiming for the temple of the sun god and the last fire. Therefore, it was like a bustling tourist destination. Hot air blew out as they entered.

“Heat *dot*? ”

“Ahh, I guess it is the temple of the sun god...”

“Are you okay *dot*? Isn’t a necromancer weak to light? The sun isn’t hurting you?”

“No.”

The temple contained a place for worship, and at the center, there was an altar which looked like a huge furnace. The heat was flowing from there. Worshippers bowed their heads towards it and prayed. There were various species present. There were warriors like Crockta, magicians, and ordinary people who didn’t know how to fight. They all prayed to the ‘last fire’ in the altar at the center of the temple.

“Isn’t it wonderful?”

A voice rang out. A dwarf in white clothing was standing beside them. He smiled gently and said,

“The sun god has been gone for a long time. He can only be found in the history books. The ‘last fire’ is the only thing left from him. But people still haven’t forgotten the sun god, so they come here and pray. Why?”

He was a priest here.

Crockta replied, “Well... is it because of the last forge?”

“Your answer isn’t wrong. But my own answer...”

The priest pointed to the ceiling of the temple.

“It is the sun god.”

“What do you mean?”

“The sun is the highest existence that cares for all things. Without the sun’s light and

heat, this world wouldn't last more than a day. It creates the seasons, helps buds grow and shines light so we can see the world. Thanks to that, the sun's grace isn't forgotten."

It was a plausible answer.

"Isn't the fact that we live on this earth the gift of the sun god? People feel this instinctively."

"It makes a lot of sense that there is a reason."

Crockta had modern knowledge, so he nodded in acknowledgment. The presence of the sun was the most basic premise for life.

After that, the priest gave further explanations.

Inside the altar was a piece of the sun god, and it contained a powerful heat that could melt anything. The last forge, which was beyond the worship room, used this heat in its furnace. The forge could only be used by selected craftsmen, and this was determined by the piece of the sun god in the altar.

After his explanation, Crockta opened his mouth, "I appreciate the valuable teachings."

"It is nothing. It is my job."

"There is one thing I would like to ask. Have you ever met a gnome traveler called Hedor?"

"Hedor... I'm not sure of the name, but there was a strange gnome. I don't know if he is Hedor or not."

"He looks like this friend." Crockta gestured to Tiyo. The priest raised his eyebrows as he saw Tiyo.

"Hoh... It seems like he is."

"What did that man come for?"

"He kept asking me about the sun god. He was interested in the ancient myths. I recall that he asked about why the sun god disappeared."

They shared some more stories about the gnome called Hedor. Tiyo's father had come here to look through the records earnestly. As they talked, it was soon time to close the temple.

"If you come back tomorrow, I will give you more information. There might be some records in the journal."

"Thank you."

"It is nothing. I am grateful that you came here without forgetting the sun god."

They exited the temple. It was a clear night. Crockta suddenly looked up at the sky.

The sun god...

Did he look different from the many different suns glowing in the sky? Crockta had heard that there were more galaxies in the universe than the grains of sand on Earth. If so, who created that infinite possibility?

Perhaps one of those distant stars was the Earth he lived on. Then at that moment...

His vision suddenly dimmed.

".....!"

It was the same feeling he'd had when the Gray God's Eyes were used. The fated deaths in the world entered his vision.

"....."

Numerous white stars were scattered in the black night sky. The white stars dimmed and became part of the black curtain. Only the darkness of the night sky remained. This was a black world where all the stars had died.

The end of the stars. He didn't want to see such a sight. Crockta shook his head.

Then he turned off the Gray God's Eyes. It wasn't well-controlled, but if he focused his mind, he could gradually escape that feeling. Soon enough, he was able to leave the power of the Gray God's Eyes.

Crockta sighed. Was he tired, or was the silent gray god doing something again?

"Crockta. Look over here *dot*."

Tiyo said. Crockta rubbed his eyes and raised his head. Then his body immediately tensed. There was a group of people holding weapons. All of them had hidden their identities behind hoods.

The man at the forefront declared, "The gods have ordered your death. I will punish you according to the divine message. Don't blame me."

The influence of the divine message began to take effect.

CHAPTER 184

THE LAST FIRE (2)

“I didn’t know that ‘Slayer Maker’ would come here.” Rastad, the old dwarf guarding the last forge, laughed while stroking his long beard. “Is Solardo of the Golden Anvil Clan doing well?”

“He is hitting the iron like before.”

“Solardo allowed you to come here?”

“.....”

Zakiro smiled, “That’s right. I came on my own.”

“I see. Any young blacksmith will come here at least once. And the Slayer Maker is qualified enough.”

“You’re overpraising me.”

“I’ve seen the Wizard Slayer that you created.”

Kang! Kang!

Rastad looked at the place where the sound came from. In one corner, a dwarf was hammering on iron. The heated piece of iron was struck by the hammer and slowly changed shaped. Then the hammering sped up.

“It is a quick and fast sword.”

“A big weapon isn’t needed to kill a magician.”

“That’s right. It was excellent. Who is using the sword now?”

“I don’t know.”

“You truly resemble Solardo.” Rastad smiled bitterly. “Wizard Slayer is now in the hands of a lunatic who hates magicians. Numerous innocent magicians have died at

his hand."

"Is that so?" Zakiro shrugged. "It has nothing to do with me."

"You truly are Solardo's clan member." Rastad laughed out loud. "Yes, Slayer Maker. What monster will you make at the last forge here? This time, will it be an ogre slayer?"

"I already created that."

"Huh, I see. It is a weapon against ogres, but the owner will surely suffer."

Zakiro shrugged at Rastad's words. He'd met the orc warrior who used Ogre Slayer and seen him kill an ogre easily. The greatsword was too big, but when it entered the orc's hands, it felt like it had been made for him.

Zakiro smiled, "Since you've completed Ogre Slayer, is it now a dragon slayer?"

"Dragon Slayer..."

Dragons were an invisible and forgotten species. At one time, they flew over mountains and valleys regularly, but now people never saw them. Some said that they were all dead, while others said they were hidden somewhere. However, one thing was certain, which was that the dragons wouldn't regain their former glory.

"My sword would lose if I make such a thing."

"Indeed, it is impossible to use a sword to fight against a dragon. Then what about a second version of Ogre Slayer? There is trouble with ogres in this area."

"I'm not sure." Zakiro's face darkened. "I will think about it."

He had left the Golden Anvil Clan because of this.

Zakiro surpassed the level of young craftsmen. At a young age, he had already become a top blacksmith, and his Slayer series were masterpieces which everyone wanted. Many warriors and knights had asked him to make weapons for them.

However, now, he didn't have a blueprint for the next piece. He didn't have an image which made him want to work the metal enthusiastically. In the old days, the true face hidden in the iron had been visible. But there was nothing now. He had broken several

attempts and beat the iron only to melt it again. So, his slump had become prolonged.

"You are young." Rastad tapped his shoulder. "Don't be in a rush. Stay and think slowly. You can stay in the blacksmith's quarters."

"Thank you."

"This is the last forge, a place where you can beat iron as long as the sun shines. Hahaha. I guess I should look at that person."

Rastad approached the blacksmith who was hammering the iron. The blacksmith was a dwarf younger than Zakiro. He didn't have the skills, but he had a passion for hammering iron. Zakiro watched them for a while before leaving the last forge.

The dwarf who was the sun god's priest saw him and bowed. Zakiro greeted him politely as well.



By the time he left the temple of the sun god, it was dark. Geherad was quiet. There were occasional raucous sounds from the pubs, but most of the buildings had turned off their lights. It was a land of the temple of the sun god. They slept early and looked forward to the sunrise, rather than staying up at night.

At that moment...

Chaeng!

Zakiro heard a noise. He turned around. As a blacksmith, it was a sound which was impossible for him not to know. It was the sound of weapons hitting each other. A battle was occurring somewhere, and the sound of the metal was strangely familiar.

He had heard that sound many times over the past few days. It was the sound of Ogre Slayer smashing monsters. Crockta was fighting.

Zakiro started running. The sound was coming from a corner of Geherad, where people rarely went. It was dark, but he ran using the light of the moon and the sound. As Zakiro approached, iron flashed in the darkness.

".....!"

A group of people was surrounding Crockta and a man. The two of them were exchanging blows. Zakiro moved closer and saw Tiyo and Anor, who spotted him and waved.

He stood next to them. "What is this...?"

"Strange guys picked a fight with us *dot*." Tiyo explained, "They said we would be punished according to a divine message... Strange guys *dot*."

".....!"

Zakiro knew about the divine message. All the gods wanted Crockta and the orcs to die. These people were probably fanatical followers of the gods. To them, the commands of the gods were absolute.

Indeed, the group of hooded men holding weapons was watching Crockta and the man fight, as if it was a sacred ceremony.

"Great *dot*. Being able to fight against Crockta..." Tiyo muttered.

However, Zakiro couldn't tell. His vision had adapted to the darkness to some extent, but their swords were moving too quickly for him to see. Every time a light flashed, someone received damage and stepped back.

Crockta, the person who conquered the north and obstructed the empire... He had killed the crazy chieftain in the north and defeated the empire's genius, Adandator. However, a nameless fanatic was matching him in the fight.

The two chose to catch their breath for a moment. Crockta stared at the man, and suspicions about the opponent filled his eyes. It was an expression which showed the fight wasn't going according to his will.

Zakiro followed Crockta's gaze towards the opponent. The hood was torn, so the opponent's face was revealed. It was a middle-aged man. He looked at Crockta with a calm expression.

Then he declared, "You can't resist the power of the gods. Accept your fate, Crockta."

It was at this moment that Zakiro realized something. There was a faint light coming from the man's sword. Magic swords were able to exert such power. However, Zakiro

saw that it wasn't a magic sword.

God's soldier...

Crockta's opponent wasn't a warrior who was good at the sword. However, he had the power of a god itself. A god's power was coming down to the man through that sword. It wasn't the god's full power as there were constraints about using divine power against mortals. However, this was enough to aim at Crockta's neck.

The man wielded his sword again. A light flashed.

Kaaang!

Crockta blocked the sword with Ogre Slayer. Then he stepped back.

"Ugh."

"In the name of the gods!"

Kakang!

Zakiro could see it. Crockta's sword, Ogre Slayer, was shaking. Zakiro was a blacksmith, a master who heard the voice of the iron and the sword. Just like how a warrior saw the paths through the opponent's gap in order to kill them, Zakiro had an eye for seeing through metals and weapons.

In his eyes, Ogre Slayer looked like a boxer who barely blocked the punch.

It had won many fights but hadn't healed properly, causing the wounds to accumulate. Its broken bones set wrong, and its wounds filled with pus. A punch to the head caused damage which would make the hands shake.

However, nevertheless, Ogre Slayer still looked straight at the opponent. This was a fight, and the opponent was still in the ring. A fighter who wouldn't collapse when weak... That was Ogre Slayer. And Zakiro was the father who had made Ogre Slayer.

"Bul'tar——!"

Crockta's roar shook Geherad...

And Crockta's speed increased.

The man stepped back from Crockta's power. An unknown swordsmanship was being used with Zakiro's sword as Ogre Slayer implemented an unknown power. The man's sword bounced off, and Ogre Slayer aimed towards the gap.

However, it was blocked. This was the god's power. Opportunities were equally given to both sides. The enemy's attack flew when Crockta's blow was deflected towards the ground. The sword had a white haze around it.

Then Crockta raised Ogre Slayer.

Kaaaang!

At that moment, Zakiro thought that Ogre Slayer would break. However, it managed to hold on. Crockta blocked the attack and kicked the man's elbow. The sword was momentarily lowered. Then Crockta turned and swung his greatsword at the man.

It seemed like this fight was over. However, the man's sword swung around in the air, as if a thread was tied to it. Then it moved into a position to stop Crockta's sword. The man grabbed his sword and inserted strength into his legs.

Kwaaaaang!

Once again, the two swords collided. The man was pushed back. It was a power struggle. The dim light from the man's sword enlarged to cover his body, and his eyes shone white. The god's power was encroaching on his body.

His sword became faster. It aimed at Crockta from every direction. Thanks to the gods, the man's attacks were swift and powerful.

“.....!”

However, Crockta's Ogre Slayer defended against all attacks. It endured, and the reaction was marvelous. Crockta was really one with the sword.

“Is that really my sword...?” Zakiro muttered.

It was beautiful swordsmanship. However, it wasn't beautiful due to smooth movements or gentle curves... But because the sword and owner were one. All types

of movements were completed with the big greatsword. Zakiro couldn't tell if Crockta was leading the sword, or if the sword was leading him. The sword was connected to Crockta, and they moved as one.

Then Crockta hit his opponent's abdomen.

"Cough!"

Crockta immediately swung the greatsword at his opponent.

Kakang!

The enemy's sword flew through the air. It rolled across the ground and stopped at Zakiro's feet. The dim light faded, and it became dark. The god left. Zakiro picked up the sword. It wasn't a bad sword, but it wasn't superb craftsmanship. It was just a fairly decent sword.

He raised his head and looked at Crockta and the man. Crockta's greatsword was pointed at the man's neck. The man slowly opened his eyes. He saw Crockta and the sword pointed at his neck. He didn't know what to do.

"Tell me about the divine message." Crockta demanded.

The man mumbled something.

Zakiro felt something strange while watching the scene. The man wasn't a great warrior... He was just a fanatic. His sword wasn't exceptional... It was just a decent sword. He was like a grain of sand compared to Crockta, a orc with a proper sword.

However, when the man used the power of the gods, he could fight against the 'Northern Conqueror.' This was the power of the gods. Crockta won now, but he would eventually fall. All the gods wanted his death.

What if this power was used on a stronger person with a better sword?

Crockta and Ogre Slayer... The beautiful dance of the two would end soon. It was inevitable. After all, it wasn't an ogre they were facing. The gods... No matter how good Ogre Slayer was, it couldn't kill a god. However...

"I want to keep watching."

As long as the sun still blazed, the last forge wouldn't turn off. Likewise, Zakiro hoped that the beautiful combination of Crockta and Ogre Slayer wouldn't end. The sword he made was more than a sword, and the harmony with its owner was a miracle he wanted to last forever.

Zakiro wanted to do it.

"This is also destiny."

A warrior had to fight. For a warrior to survive, he must kill without dying... And in order to kill, he needed a weapon that could kill.

CHAPTER 185

HOMECOMING

“Tell me about the divine message.” Crockta asked the man. The man didn’t want to talk, but he opened his mouth the moment Ogre Slayer approached his neck.

“God wants your death.”

“God? Why?”

“I don’t know. I am just following the will of God. God has commanded you to die. I borrowed his power and came to kill you according to his words. That is all.”

“Which god?”

“The elder god of the mountain, where you will reap all the blood you sowed.”

Crockta was confused.

He had heard of the elder god of the mountain. It was a small religion spread over the mountain areas of the continent. Those who lived in the mountains mainly followed it, but in comparison to its rustic image, the religion had a cruel doctrine. However, why did the elder god of the mountain suddenly want to kill him?

While Crockta was thinking, the man continued speaking,

“Accept your fate. Other people will come...”

“There are others?”

“You really don’t know anything. That isn’t all. All the gods on this continent have commanded your death. Even the goddess of mercy desires your death.”

Crockta’s expression distorted. “Why?”

“We can’t know the minds of the gods. You must’ve done something bad to incur the wrath of the gods. Repent, Crockta. An eye for an eye, blood for blood.”

"I don't understand that reasoning." Crockta raised his greatsword.

The man shouted, "I have failed today, but in the end, the gods will find you! In the end...! Kuheok!"

Crockta kicked the man's belly. The man curled up on the ground. Crockta looked down at the man, and laughed.

"You are too noisy. I just want to find out the situation."

"Ugh...!" The man sprawled out on the ground. "The orcs will not survive the wrath of the gods!"

"What did you say?"

Crockta lowered his posture and stared at the man.

"The orcs?

"Yes! The gods desire not just your death but the death of all the orcs! You will perish!"

"....."

Crockta raised his gaze and stared at the group of hooded men, followers of the elder god of the mountain. They flinched from his murderous gaze. They couldn't even think about raising their weapons as they stepped back.

Crockta growled, "Is that true?"

"....."

They couldn't open their mouths, causing Crockta to grab the neck of the collapsed man, who was shouting about the will of the gods. Then at that moment, the man couldn't breathe.

"Keeok! Ke...!"

"Answer me. Do the gods really want to kill the orcs as well as me? Is that the divine message of your god?"

Crockta got up. The man struggled. He was breathless and clutching at Crockta's wrist. Looking at the man's pained appearance, the other followers cried out,

"Y-Yes. The words are correct. So, let go of him quickly!"

"Kill all the orcs?"

"Yes, the gods said so. To make the orcs a forgotten species."

Crockta nodded. Then he threw the man. The man flew towards the other followers, causing the group to fall and roll across the ground. In the turmoil, some of the hoods fell off. They were all ordinary humans, ordinary people who looked after the fields or hunted in the mountains.

Crockta muttered, "Why do the gods want the death of me and all the orcs?"

What was going on? The followers edged away helplessly. Crockta noticed them, but he then said with a sigh,

"Get lost." It was like giving permission. They ran away hastily as soon as Crockta's words ended. Only the man's weapon remained on the ground. Crockta grabbed it. It was an ordinary sword. However, when the light of divine power surrounded it, the sword emitted a force which was hard for Crockta to deal with.

Beings with this power were aiming at the orcs... Not just one orc but all of them.

"This is definitely a headache."

Why couldn't they leave him in peace? It wasn't possible for him to stay still after hearing that the gods were aiming at all the orcs.

"Why are the gods doing this *dot*? Did you speak ill of the gods?"

Tiyo asked after watching the scene. Crockta shrugged, "I don't know. It would be really unfair even if I did."

"That is true. There is always a mountain after crossing a mountain *dot*."

"Great chieftain, empire, and now the gods... Will everything be okay?" Anor looked at Crockta with trembling eyes.

“It can’t be helped, even if it isn’t okay.”

“Then shouldn’t you head quickly to the other orcs? They are aiming at the orcs.”

“Indeed *dot*. Quickly. I can find my father later, so let’s fight with Crockta’s friends *dot!* Against those gods!”

“Um...”

Crockta thought about it. If orcs were the target, then Orcrox and Basque Village came to mind. There was also the land of the orcs in the north. However, those who borrowed the power of the gods couldn’t invade it. Perhaps the gods’ followers were already moving.

In that case, even one more person would help.

“Yes...” Crockta muttered.

Then someone interrupted. “Stay a little longer.”

It was Zakiro.

“Zakiro.”

“There is no one crazy enough to fight all the orcs immediately after the gods have sent the divine message. The present era isn’t a time where the gods can run rampant like before.”

“So, there is no need to worry?”

“No, there is no need to hurry. Even if things will happen, there is still time. The followers have to look at their own interests and circumstances. They will gather the forces slowly.”

Zakiro wasn’t looking at Crockta while talking. Crockta followed Zakiro’s glance and confirmed what he was watching. It was Ogre Slayer in Crockta’s hands.

“You need to be prepared if you really want to fight the gods.”

“Prepared?”

Zakiro raised his gaze towards Crockta. Crockta shrank back from the look in Zakiro's eyes. There were flames blazing in Zakiro's eyes, and they weren't of a small fire. It was a furnace that could melt iron.

"I am going to fix Ogre Slayer."



"Hahahahat!" Someone was laughing. "So, you tried to kill us? You? Really?"

She tugged at the hair of the human she had captured. She was sitting on top of a tower of human bodies. The man at the very top wasn't dead yet. He shivered and begged for forgiveness.

"Please... stop..."

"Stop?"

She pulled the hair with more strength. The man's neck was pulled back, and he couldn't talk anymore. She pushed her face against his.

"Say it again, again. If you won and we lost, would you stop if we told you to stop?"

"Keooook..."

"Where is your confidence from earlier? Huh?"

She grabbed the ax at her waist. It wasn't big and looked more like a throwing ax. She raised the ax to the man's eyes.

"Say it again."

"Please..."

"I might forgive you. Tell me again what you said when you first saw us."

"Forgive..."

She looked annoyed, "If you say it, I will forgive you!"

She pierced the man's eyes with the ax. Blood flowed from it. The man shrieked.

"Now, tell me before it becomes more painful. What did you say when you first found us?"

"Heok, kuheok... First, first..."

"Yes. The first thing."

"I-In the name of the gods..."

"And?"

"K-Kill Crockta and the orcs, k-kill..."

"Wrong."

She wielded the ax again. The man's nose was split. The man screamed, and blood burst out.

She started humming, "What did you say?"

"Keook..."

"Kill the dirty and rodent-like orcs, mutilate their bodies, and hang them at the gates."

She hummed and swung her ax again. Every time her arm moved, blood splattered on the man's face. More and more, the appearance of a person was becoming less visible.

"Kill, did you say?"

"Ple... please..."

"Then I will take your life."

She rose from her spot. Then she grabbed the man's neck and pushed him down. The man rolled down the pile of bodies and fell to the bottom. Her followers, who were continuing the massacre, asked her, "Captain! What should we do now?"

"They want to kill us, so we can't let them live."

“Kulkulkul, good!”

They wielded their weapons, and terrible screams were heard. Suddenly, she saw a man crawling on the ground in order to run away. She threw her ax. It was aimed accurately at the man. The ax tore through the air and split apart his head. Brain matter flowed down.

“Kill those who want to live.”

She smiled.

“It is over, Captain Anya!”

“You did well.”

She was an orc warrior known as the mad slaughterer, notorious for being a crazy berserker. The ‘mad slaughterer’ Anya... She had declared revenge on the noble who killed Lenox, torturing him and killing his followers. That was the berserker Anya.

Anya laughed as the slaughter finished and muttered,

“Kuhuhut. That Crockta, he has become a big man.”

Anya remembered when she first saw Crockta. She had come to Orcrox for Lenox’s funeral and seen the apprentice warrior who had been the last one to speak with Lenox. His behavior was awkward but the willpower burning in his eyes seemed like something he’d inherited from Lenox.

“Conquering the north, thwarting the empire, and now fighting the gods?”

Anya’s eyes shone.

“His skills...”

She laughed again. Then at that moment...

The air near her distorted.

Anya frowned, “What, all of a sudden!”

The figure of an orc slowly appeared. He looked at Anya with his translucent body, and his shape gradually became clear. He was a bald male orc without a single stitch of clothing, while necklaces made of all types of animal bones and skulls were hanging around his neck. Additionally, a strangely bent staff was held in his hand.

It was the shaman who pursued the abyss, 'Abyss Seeker' Wallachwi.

"Lenox and Crockta... Kuhul... hulhul..."

"Shut up."

"I thought you had a strange taste... You also like the young... Kuhulhul... hul..."

"You really make me feel bad. How long have you been here?"

"I don't know...? Kuhul... hul!"

Anya grabbed another ax from her waist. However, it couldn't touch Wallachwi and passed straight through his body.

"It is no use. Kuhul... hul!"

"Witchcraft is really nasty."

Anya licked her lips and placed the ax back on her waist. Anya's subordinates finished their work and greeted Wallachwi.

"Wallachwi! It is great to see you after so long! Kuhulhul!"

"I am alive! Bul'tar!"

"I heard the news! Crockta is doing something fun! Kulkulkul!"

"There will be a festival again! Kuhahat!"

"Fight, fight!" They laughed while shouting. Indeed, they were the berserkers who followed Anya.

Anya smiled at them before asking Wallachwi, "Are you going? To Orcrox?"

A divine message had been passed against the entire orc species. They always wandered around the continent, but since this had happened, they needed to return to Orcrox. Just like when all the great orcs on the continent had returned home for Lenox's funeral.

"Of course. Kuhul... hul!"

Wallachwi smiled. Anya nodded.

"Zankus?"

"He will go after finishing a hunt... Kuhuhu...!"

"What is he hunting? That abnormal bastard."

Her followers shouted, "We're done!"

"Yes. Then let's go!"

After completing the massacre, Anya's group started to head towards Orcrox, and next to Anya was the translucent shaman shaking his staff. It had been a while since Lenox had died. In the meantime, the north had opened, and the kingdom had become an empire. An immature apprentice warrior had become a great warrior... And now, the gods wanted to kill the orcs.

The legendary powerhouses of the orcs began to gather again.

CHAPTER 186

GOD SLAYER (1)

A blacksmith's blood flowed through the dwarves of the Golden Anvil Clan. Zakiro had been born as the most talented one among them. The clan's chief craftsman, Solardo had told him,

'If you are a true Golden Anvil craftsman, you can see the finished product before you melt it.'

Zakiro believed he had understood those words. He always had a blueprint. The moment he wanted to make something, he was clear about how it would be completed. All the masterpieces he had already created were once in his head. However, Zakiro realized that wasn't the case. He hadn't seen it properly. Zakiro had used his intuition to complete it, but he hadn't really seen it.

"Now I see."

Zakiro muttered as he saw the weapon which filled his mind. He could see what it would be like, what type of power it had, and how it could be created. Additionally, he could see what it would cost. Zakiro wanted to move his body. Right now, an unknown inspiration was filling him and moving through his entire body. He wanted to start working soon.

"You came. Zakiro."

"Yes."

Zakiro's body trembled. Rastad, the blacksmith who maintained the last forge, saw Zakiro's face, and his eyes widened. He studied Zakiro and laughed. "That' has arrived."

"What is it?"

"The thing that comes to a great blacksmith once in their lives." Rastad looked around the last forge. There was nothing special except for the fact that it was in the temple where the last fire was kept. "Come along."

Zakiro followed Rastad. There was a door in the forge. Rastad opened it to reveal stairs. Then they went down to another smithy. Dust had accumulated since it hadn't been used for a long time, but the facility itself was good to use right now.

"Use this place."

"This place..."

"It is literally the last forge. The outside area is just an assortment of things."

Zakiro looked around the interior. It was the first time he'd seen it, but it felt familiar somehow. The inspiration in his head and the familiar feeling of this forge tangled together.

"So, what will you create? Will you use iron?"

"It will come soon."

As Zakiro spoke, there was a small noise from above. They waited for a bit, and someone came down the stairs. It was Crockta. He greeted them with a huge sword on his shoulders.

"Zakiro. You were here. Ah, someone else? I am Crockta, a warrior"

"I am Rastad. I am the blacksmith who maintains the last forge."

"It is a pleasure. I am alive."

"It has been a long time since I've heard an orc greeting."

The two of them shook hands, then Crockta looked around the forge. "Will you fix my sword here?"

Zakiro smiled. "That's right. You can be expectant."

"Well..." Crockta looked at Zakiro and Rastad. He scratched his head and put down Ogre Slayer. "At any rate, thank you. Please take care of it."

"Don't worry."

"I have to talk to the priest." Crockta's hands moved awkwardly without Ogre Slayer as he climbed the stairs.

Zakiro's and Rastad's eyes turned to Ogre Slayer. It was an excellent greatsword.

...Except for the fact that it was breaking down.

"This sword?"

"That's right."

"Haha... That warrior, he is Crockta. Now I understand why your eyes are like that."

Excellent warriors always inspired blacksmiths. The Golden Anvil Clan might have a philosophy of not caring about the users of their weapons, it was exciting to make a weapon for a warrior like Crockta.

"Maybe this is the arrangement of the sun god." Rastad muttered.

Zakiro was silently moving Ogre Slayer. He had begun working.

Rastad watched quietly. The genius of the Golden Anvil Clan, the Slayer Maker who had created many masterpieces at a young age... What would his ability be like? At that moment, the forge became hot.

"Ah...!"

Rastad could feel it clearly. The temple of the sun was welcoming Zakiro. The last fire, which hadn't reacted to blacksmiths for a long time, started to heat up the forge.

Rastad was in awe. "Finally, a blacksmith has appeared to match the last forge!"

This was the true last fire which Rastad had experienced a few times during his youth but could no longer use. It was the last fire in the temple of the sun god. In combination with the last forge...

A greatsword was reborn again.



Crockta, Tiyo, and Anor went to have tea with the priest. While Ogre Slayer was being repaired, they wanted to find out as much as possible about Hedor.

“You are looking for Hedor.” The priest took out some papers from the temple’s archives. Things like the temple’s entrance register and access records remained. “He did a lot of research on the sun god in the temple. The inquisitive gnome asked me many things. Why the sun god disappeared, the circumstances of the gods...”

“Why did the sun god disappear *dot*? ”

Tiyo asked.

The priest laughed. “Humans can’t accurately know the story of the gods. The reason he fell into a deep sleep is probably due to a problem when fighting the gods in the past.”

“The gods fought *dot*? ”

“That’s right. The reason was never revealed, but there are records about a dispute among the gods. In the aftermath, one god died, one god fell and one god went to sleep.”

Crockta’s eyes widened. In the aftermath, one god had died, one god had fallen, and one god had gone to sleep. The gray god was the one who had fallen.

Crockta asked, “What gods are they? ”

The priest laughed. “Haha. You are only asking hard questions. Please remember, this is just a story and it isn’t definite. I will warn you in advance.”

“It’s okay.”

“Of course, the sun god is the one who fell asleep. The gray god is the one who fell. No one can remember what she was the god of, or what power she had.”

“.....! ”

The gray god... The one who linked Elder Lord to Earth and seemed to be plotting

something. When she fell, one god had died and one had gone to sleep. There was a relationship between the gray god and the sun god. The journey to find Hedor was becoming increasingly connected to the answers Crockta wanted to find.

Crockta asked again, “Then the dead god...?”

“Ahh. He was like a father and mother to the sun god. He is...” The priest paused for a moment before replying, “The ‘stars’.”



“There are many stars in the sky.”

Yoo Jaehan muttered. He was sitting on the beach and looking up at the sky. It was night, but young people were still gathered on the white sand. They occasionally threw stones at the surface of the sea and squashed beer cans.

“Try to imagine it.”

A voice suddenly said. Yoo Jaehan turned his head. A woman was sitting beside him. Her skin and hair were exceptionally white. It was a unique appearance, but thanks to the darkness and the hat covering her head, no one in the vicinity noticed.

She was the gray god.

“The sight of the stars disappearing from the sky.”

“Awful.”

“I always have to see it.”

“.....” Yoo Jaehan smiled. “How awful.”

“After coming to this world... I don’t want to see that type of thing... Still, seeing the stars of Earth relieves some of the despair.”

“Do you want a beer or something to drink?”

“It is okay.”

“It isn’t uncommon for you to drink or eat.”

“You spoke to Jung Ian.”

“Ian asked me about you.”

She scooped up the sand with her hand. Yoo Jaehan asked, “Is the plan going well?”

“Somewhat.”

“What is your influence?”

“The achievement points keep rising. It is thanks to Crockta, Rommel, and Keynes. The rankers are much better than I thought.”

“Yes...” Yoo Jaehan smiled. “They have no idea what they are doing.”

“Yes, that is better. Do you know? When Crockta came alone, I got angry and raised his assimilation rate to the limit. At that time, I ended up giving a little bit of my power to Crockta. So, I was worried... The gods noticed I had something to do with Crockta and told people to wipe out Crockta and the orcs.”

The gray god chattered on, and Yoo Jaehan listened to her words.

“If they move in the correct manner, Crockta won’t be able to stay still... Once this is over, I can really accomplish my plan. Now is the real beginning.”

“Yes, it seems like it.”

“So...” The gray god got up. “When the time comes, please thank Jung Ian for me.”

Yoo Jaehan looked at the sea and replied, “Until then. If he is still alive, I will.”

“Yes. Well, even so. He will be alive. Otherwise, I will be sorry.”

“Really?”

“Really.”

Yoo Jaehan smiled and nodded.

The gray god added, "Ah right, Gordon wanted to say hello to you."

"Is he doing well?"

"He is."

"Gordon is also a great person."

Suddenly, there were fireworks on the beach. The long curves of light rose into the sky. The gray god spread open her arms and gazed at the embers in the night sky.

"Pretty."



After Rastad left, Zakiro pulled something out. It was a small lump of golden metal.

When Zakiro gained the title of Slayer Maker and rose to the rank of a craftsman, Solardo of the Golden Anvil Clan had given it to him.

'You can only use it once. Keep this in mind. If you aren't ready, it will be used in vain. You will have consumed it uselessly. The craftsmen who used it correctly are recorded in the history of the Golden Anvil Clan.'

Most people used it in vain, but those who used it correctly made the best weapons in history. It was a piece of golden metal given to the craftsmen of the clan. This was why Zakiro's clan was called the Golden Anvil.

That was a piece of a golden anvil. The clan split apart the anvil, which was said to have been given to them by a god, and gave the pieces to their craftsmen. The pieces would gradually disappear over time. Fortunately, Zakiro had been able to receive a piece at a young age.

He sensed that now was the right time to use it. So, Zakiro grabbed it. It melted and disappeared into Ogre Slayer's melted form. The color of the molten iron became even redder. However, the piece of the anvil didn't melt completely.

Zakiro started to furiously work the bellow, and the temperature started rising gradually. Sweat flowed down Zakiro's face, and it felt like the bones in his body were melting. His hands worked faster.

Then after a moment...

A tremendous heat hit him.

".....!"

He stepped back like he had been pushed, and he stared blankly at the sight in front of him—a fire. The furnace was literally ablaze.

Zakiro watched it. There was something shining in the furnace. It was a red crystal... And it was dazzling, like a ball of flames. Zakiro knew what it was. The last flame...

This was 'it.' The last fire should be at the altar above, but now it was down in the forge. The fire added to the heat which was melting Ogre Slayer. The forge—no, the entire temple started to heat up.

The temperature rose. It was unexpected. Above him, there was the sound of people urgently rushing out of the temple. Shouts could also be heard.

Zakiro gritted his teeth and withstood the heat. The last flame... This was a crystal left behind by the sun god. It melted the piece of the Golden Anvil as well as Ogre Slayer. Zakiro laughed. Despite the heat covering his entire body, he burst out laughing. His intuition, close to a prophetic ability, wasn't wrong after all.

He had seen this scene already. He had known it would be here. The world was pushing at his back. The sun, the hottest flames which could melt anything... No one would be able to endure it.

...Not even the gods.

Zakiro made a fist as he glanced at the molten iron. This sword would be his best masterpiece, and it would be the best work in the history of the Golden Anvil Clan. The purpose of the sword was simple.

God killer...

The sword which was born with the flames of the sun...

It could even kill a god.

CHAPTER 187

GOD SLAYER (2)

Geherad was in turmoil. The temple of the sun god, which could be called the reason for Geherad's existence, was on fire.

“Everybody evacuate!”

“What is going on?”

“Fire, fire!”

The first place to react was the worship room. The fire started at the altar that contained the last fire and started to spread throughout the temple. The worshipers shouted and ran away, along with the guards of the temple. The terrified blacksmiths also left the forge.

It was the same for the priest and Crockta's group in the archives. They rushed outside as the temple became hotter.

“What is this...?”

“Oh my god.”

“The sun god!”

“Come this way!”

Those who evacuated to the outskirts stared at the temple with devastation. Crockta gazed at the temple. It seemed like the entire building was on fire. Nevertheless, the temple itself didn't combust. The whole temple felt like a melting fire pit but nothing was destroyed. Even the flags flying from the temple maintained their intact appearance. It maintained its intact appearance despite being surrounded by a red flame.

The priest muttered, “The sun will burn his enemy and wrap itself around his children. To those who don't believe in him, he is the plague of hell.”

People looked at him.

"This is the power of the sun god. His flame is said to burn the enemies, while not harming those who weren't enemies."

"Ahh..."

"Is the sun god waking up? This is obviously his power."

"Perhaps finally..."

The huge temple was burning while maintaining its appearance. It was an unbelievable sight that couldn't be understood unless the power of a god were involved. People started to talk about the resurrection of the sun god.

Then someone said, "No, that isn't the case."

"Rastad?"

It was Rastad. There was an unknown expression on his face. It was both jubilant and bittersweet.

"That isn't the resurrection of the sun god."

"Huh?"

"It is the last forge."

Everyone staring blankly at him. Only the priest nodded like he understood, "I understand. It is the last forge."

"What do you mean?" Wasn't the last forge the place where we were?"

One blacksmith asked Rastad. Rastad shook his head.

"That is just a room next to the worship room. The true last forge is somewhere else, and it isn't a place we can use whenever we want. It is a legendary forge that appears when the last fire burns." Now there was a clear smile on his face. "There are three conditions necessary to truly use the last forge. It will appear when the world needs the last forge, when a worthy craftsman puts the iron into the furnace and..."

He looked at Crockta, who flinched. Rastad smiled so widely that his canine teeth were revealed.

“When a warrior who deserves a weapon made in the last forge is met. The last forge will only appear then.”

Rastad finished speaking and fell silent. It was a sight that he might never see again in his life.

At that moment. It started to rain.

Chiiik!

Steam appeared as the fire around the temple and the rain met. The entire temple was covered in steam, making it not visible anymore. Consecutive scenes that were hard to believe appeared. Then they heard the sound of iron being hit.

Kaaang!

The sound became bigger.

Kaaang!

There was the blazing temple, pouring rain and hammering sound that rang out all over Geherad.

Kaaang!



After the divine message was received, public opinion wandered for a while but it gradually moved towards a conclusion. All temples followed the will of their gods and designated Crockta as an enemy to be destroyed.

“I never thought the day would come when all gods would whisper the same words.” A man wearing steel armor said.

Duke Christian of the empire looked at him.

“It is a chance I never thought would come in my life. I am going.”

The man standing in front of him was one of Christian's subordinates. He was an important talent, a person that Christian didn't spare any support for and was placed right below him. The strongest magician Mogsulin was one of his representatives.

It was the same for the man in front of him, a paladin chosen by the god of war. Using the god of war's blessing, Aklan wiped out all enemies in front of him. He welcomed this divine message more than anyone else. He wanted to get rid of Crockta and the orcs as soon as possible.

His determined eyes proved this.

"Hrmm, I see." Christian thought about it.

The deeply religious elves and dwarves were already preparing to march. It was a divine message so volunteer troops gathered together. Those who knew how to fight, the soldiers and those who wanted to win gathered together. It wasn't just due to the divine message but also the ambition to distinguish themselves in a great cause. Those who wanted to know themselves and acquire honor lined up. The goal was Orcrox in the land of the orcs.

The man standing here, Aklan, was a person filled with both honor and faith in his god.

"If that is your will, I can't stop you." Duke Christian replied. He spoke negatively to the emperor about this fight, but he also thought it was important. However, he didn't want to follow the trend. He was the person throwing the fire, not the one who caught on fire.

And Aklan was the best person to set fire to. He believed in the god of war. That was the reason for Aklan's existence. This fanaticism would spread to people like a disease.

"Adandator wants to accompany me."

"Adandator?"

"Yes."

Adandator had been injured in the battle against Crockta. Was it due to vengeance? Or maybe Aklan's madness had moved him.

"Okay."

It didn't matter. Adandator was a person close to the emperor. He didn't have a large relationship with Christian.

"Please understand, I can't send the regular armies and knights. It is because it is the emperor, not the gods, that is at the top of the empire." Christian explained.

"I know."

"But that doesn't mean you can't recruit volunteers. Gather people from the temple of the war god. Try whatever you can. I will speak to the emperor. If the soldiers want to go, they will be able to."

"Thank you." Aklan bowed deeply. "I will return to pay back all your grace."

"Don't worry about that. Bring back victory. That is enough."

"Yes!"

"Then please go." Aklan rose, bowed once more to Christian and turned around.

Christian watched him leave and thought.

'Please spread this war so that everyone will become wounded, and there is no clear winner'

"The orcs will truly cease to exist. Then the balance of the continent will fall."

Create a shocking and exciting upheaval.

Christian smiled. "What do you think?"

Then a man standing next to Duke Christian revealed himself. The robed man was the great magician, Mogsulin.

"The orcs will disappear from the continent."

"Aren't there monsters among the orcs?"

"They are monsters, but their opponents are gods. All the gods are hostile to the orcs. Who can survive?"

“Indeed.”

“It can’t be helped, even if the fallen god is behind them.”

According to Mogsulin, the power of the fallen god was felt strongly from Crockta when he fought the empire, making the gods take this action.

“I’m glad you are here.”

Mogsulin had touched the Pinnacle and was linked to the gods. He overheard the stories of the gods and told Christian. Without Mogsulin, he wouldn’t have known all of this. Mogsulin smiled and bowed at Christian’s praise.

“But what will happen if that Crockta wins? He has succeeded in doing things that seem impossible. He is an orc but I admire him. No matter how great the gods are, I can’t help feeling uneasy.”

“This time, even he’s unable to do anything. He might be the best fighter who defeated Adandator, but the gods aren’t existences that can be killed with swords.”

“Those who can’t be killed by swords... how reliable.”

Christian laughed. People all over the continent were following the divine message. This was a great opportunity for those like Christian.



The rain didn’t stop falling in Geherad. Nevertheless, the flames around the temple didn’t go out. People tried to approach the temple but couldn’t enter due to the heat. An extraordinary event was going on.

In addition, the banging sound continued to ring through Geherad.

Kaaang!

Kaaang!

“Zakiro, is he alive?”

“We can still hear the sound...”

“Has he eaten *dot*?”

“.....”

“What a great guy, *dot*. If I was him, I would die from hunger. Ohh.”

Kaaang!

According to the priest and Rastad, Zakiro was currently making a weapon with the last fire. A type of divine power had descended. However, Crockta, Tiyo, and Anor focused on eating as the crazy blacksmith hammered on the iron.

The interior was very hot so Zakiro might already be burned. Fortunately, the knocking sound continued but it was unknown if he was perfectly safe. This was a problem that continued all day.

“By the way, my father said he was going north *dot*.”

“That’s right,” said the priest as he drank his beer.

Due to the burning temple, the priest lost his home and stayed with Crockta’s group at the inn for a while. There was no rule against priests drinking alcohol. The excited priest drank the beer. He maintained good manners but he was still a dwarf.

“I remember him saying it in passing. He is seeking a person who knows the myths in the north.”

“My dad really is a wanderer *dot*.”

They pursued him from the north to the south, then the west and now they were heading north again. It was traveling all around the continent.

“But this time, the north...” Tiyo looked at Crockta and asked, “Won’t the land of the orcs appear *dot*?”

“Indeed,” Crockta nodded in agreement. If they headed north from Geherad, Orcrox and Basque Village would appear. Their destination was there, as if someone was intentionally leading them.

“It has been a really long time since I’ve returned home.”

The place where everything began, Orcrox. Crockta was filled with a burning desire to go back there.

“By the way, when will Zakiro finish the sword? I’m looking forward to it.”

“Me too *dot*. Crockta is great, isn’t this like a divine sword?”

“Do you think it might be a legendary sword?”

They looked at Crockta. All of this was happening due to Crockta’s Ogre Slayer. What type of weapon would be created? Crockta scratched his head and said, “Uhh... well...”

He wasn’t sure. He expected a great weapon, but it became somewhat burdensome due to the burning temple, steam and knocking sound.

At that moment, a dwarf sitting in the next chair asked, “Hey, can you hear that sound anymore?”

The sound of iron being hammered had stopped.

“.....”

It was quiet. Everyone got up in excitement.

“Perhaps!”

“This!”

“Let’s go *dot*!”

The group left the inn. It was still raining. In the rain, the temple lost the fire and steam, gradually returning to its original appearance. The flames around the temple that surprised Geherad faded.

Crockta’s group ran towards the temple. As they approached, they saw a man appear at the door of the temple. It was Zakiro. His body was covered in soot but his eyes were shining. He found Crockta and started to walk over, his steps filled with exhaustion.

He was holding a greatsword in his hand.

Crockta approached and faced him.

“...Good work.”

Zakiro stopped, looked up at Crockta, and laughed. Words weren’t necessary. Zakiro, a blacksmith of the Golden Anvil Clan, a genius who received the title of ‘Slayer Maker’ at a young age. He handed over the weapon that he poured everything into.

“.....!”

Crockta realized it the moment he received the new sword. This wasn’t a normal greatsword. He knew it. It was more than a weapon. The standards that he knew about swords were all broken, and he felt like he could cause a miracle just holding this sword.

The perfect gift for a warrior. Crockta wielded it before looking at Zakiro with a shiver. How should he show his appreciation to the blacksmith who created this?

“Zakiro...”

Crockta opened his mouth. His mouth opened and closed. Crockta was speechless as he suppressed his emotions.

“Geez, something like this...”

CHAPTER 188

KILL THE THUNDERBIRD (1)

Crockta gripped his newly acquired sword.

Zakiro called it 'God Slayer.' A sword that could kill a god. Crockta didn't think this was an exaggeration. He felt like he really could kill a god with this sword.

The shape was similar to the previous sword. Ogre Slayer was a huge greatsword that seemed too big to be a sword. However, the feeling in his hand was different from before. The weight was familiar to Ogre Slayer, but an unknown heat was coming from it.

The blade was dark but every time he swung it, there was an unknown gold glow and a red energy rose from it. He wanted to swing it.

"Crockta! The arrangements are ready *dot!*"

Of course, he would soon have a chance to wield it. Crockta's group decided to leave Geherad immediately after obtaining God Slayer. The road to Hedor was in the north and the orcs were also in danger from the divine message.

Tiyo had shouted while carrying the luggage.

"You're going now. Thank you for the support." Zakiro said while watching Crockta. Crockta nodded at him.

Zakiro was unbelievably healthy despite striking iron for so long. His body was a little weak, but it would recover when replenished with the right nutrition. Rather, he said he felt stronger than before.

Crockta ask, "When are you going to leave?"

"I will stay here a few months to watch the skills of the blacksmith. Then I will decide if I want to go back to the clan or explore the world."

Zakiro was calmer after making God Slayer. It felt like his weapons could reach a new

level.

"You should stop by Orcrox if you have time. It is full of warriors you can make weapons for."

"I'll think about it." Zakiro laughed. He no longer thought about the weapon and user as separate. Crockta placed God Slayer on his back and went to Tiyo. Tiyo handed the backpack to Crockta. It was heavy.

"T-This?"

"Maybe it is because of the last forge, but these things were really cheap *dot*." He opened it to see various types of steel products such as a pot, a set of small knives, and other various materials. "You should take advantage of the special treatment when possible *dot*!"

"I see."

A trip wasn't possible with just a sword. Various tools were needed. Anor also carried a backpack. His face was grouchy. Crockta laughed.

"Then shall we go?"

Crockta's group said goodbye to Zakiro.

"Zakiro! Next time, make me a nice one as well *dot*!"

"You already have General."

"I can daydream *dot*!"

After parting from Zakiro, they stopped by the temple to say farewell to the priest. The priests prayed for them to receive the blessing of the sun god. In particular, he made a meaningful remark as he watched Crockta carry God Slayer.

"The power of the sun will burn away all unclean things, be careful of being corrupted so that you don't get burned by it."

Crockta nodded. They left Geherad.



Akhan recruited an army for this expedition. The target was Crockta and the orcs, the objects of the gods' anger.

The reaction was explosive.

Akhan promised to distribute the benefits of the orc conquest mission fairly to the volunteers. Numerous nobles who believed in the gods supported them. Regular people gathered under the flag of the god. Whether it was due to faith in the god of war or Akhan's fanaticism, the number of volunteers for the expedition continued to soar.

It wasn't just Akhan and the war god. All priests on the continent were embarking on their own expeditions. The number of people participating was incredible. It was an unexpected response for the emperor and Crockta.

The expeditions tried to attract all those who believed in the gods.

"The envoy has arrived."

Guardi, the mayor of Katalu and leader of the Free Cities Alliance, was no exception. Guardi looked at the envoy from the empire with a fierce expression. He had nothing to say to the empire.

"Mayor Katalu, now is the time to put down the weapons."

"What are you talking about?"

"You know that there is a divine message. All gods are saying the same thing."

Guardi knew it. Espada also had temples, and the divine message was the same everywhere.

"You were once enemies with the empire, but that was the work of humans. Now it is time to join together for a bigger task. It is the gods' work. The expeditions are aiming at Crockta and the orcs. Together, let's stop them."

Guardi looked grim. Then he looked around. When the empire's envoy arrived, he had gathered the high-ranking bureaucrats responsible for managing Katalu, as well as

representatives of the citizens. All of them had a similar expression.

“You mean... wipe out Crockta and his species?”

“That’s right.”

“We should do it together?”

“Yes!”

Guardi sneered.

“If this is true...” Then he apologized. “I’m sorry but I’m really busy. I thought it was something big because you came from the empire.”

“Hahaha, the people from the empire have bad heads.”

“They are trying to say something like this to us. Hahaha.”

Guardi and the other representatives of Katalu burst out laughing. The face of the envoy became red.

“Are you saying that you won’t participate in the expedition?”

“Oh, now you understand? You are a little slow.”

Guardi burst out laughing. The envoy formed a fist.

“After this expedition, all those who don’t take part will be enemies. This isn’t our work, but a mission from the gods. Aren’t you afraid of the wrath of the gods?”

“Gods?” Guardi laughed. “What did the gods do when your empire invaded us?”

“Once again, humans...”

“It wasn’t your gods who saved us, but Crockta. Crockta is our benefactor and his friends were our saviors.”

“.....”

"Do you understand what I'm saying?"

"You won't participate, I understand," replied the envoy through his thin lips.

Katalu's defense chief, listening quietly next to Guardi, said with a smile, "The gods can do the work of the gods themselves. We will take care of our own work. Isn't that right? Emperor's dogs?"

"....." The envoy glared at him. He suppressed his emotions and bowed to Guardi. "Your will, I understand it. I will tell the emperor and the gods. In detail."

"Uh, yes. Tell the emperor to be careful when walking at night."

"....."

After hearing the emperor being mocked like he was a neighborhood thief, the envoy couldn't take it anymore and quickly left. Before he left through the door, he turned and said to them.

"The expedition will depart soon. Volunteers will keep joining until we reach Orcrox. Think carefully about what will happen to you once the expedition is over."

Then he left the room.

Guardi shrugged. "The imperial people, you are all insane. Good luck."



They headed north through the great forest. The terrain was harsh and monsters kept appearing to interfere with their course. But Crockta was eager to have opponents to test his new weapon against.

Right now, his opponent was a drake. It was reminiscent to the drakes he met in the north. The drake, that resembled a dragon, watched Crockta. But before it could bare its sharp teeth, the shimmering golden sword struck its body.

"Kyaak!"

The drake screamed and stepped back. However, Crockta didn't stop as he kept wielding his greatsword. Blood and flesh scattered. The drake swung its paws.

Kakang!

The claws and blade met, causing sparks to fly. However, the drake couldn't resist because it had already been damaged by the greatsword. The drake withdrew. Crockta jumped and sliced at the drake's head. Cutting it in two with one stroke of the sword! The drake's head split apart and it died instantly.

"Huhu, good."

"What is good *dot*? It has already been many times!"

Crockta was glad about testing out his new weapon, but the rest of the group were tired of all the creatures appearing. In accordance with the reputation of the great forest, many creatures emerged to annoy them.

"It can't be helped. We are deep inside the forest."

The map showed the best path, but the long distance to their goal was apparent. Therefore, they chose to go straight through. Now they were already too far to go back.

"Uh... based on these circumstances, an ogre wizard will soon appear *dot*."

Ogre wizard. A rare ogre that could use magic, they hardly ever appeared. Just like the goblin shaman, they played a key role in their clan. But since it was an ogre, the risk far exceeded the goblins. The presence of an ogre wizard meant that an enormous number of ogres were present.

"Don't worry. I will never be cut with God Slayer!"

Crockta laughed as he admired at God Slayer. Suddenly, the flesh and blood covering God Slayer started to burn and dissipate. This was one of the strange functions of God Slayer, who had the power of the last fire.

Crockta smiled at the sight of the cleaned blade.

"Ah, hot!" Crockta was surprised and threw the sword. "I forgot, hot hot hot!"

"...Didn't you say that warriors shouldn't treat their weapons like lovers *dot*?"

God Slayer seemed desolate from its place in the ground. Crockta coughed as he

calmed down. He carefully checked the temperature of the blade and picked it up again.

“Hrmm. My mistake.”

“How many times has it been *dot*? ”

“The third time today. Monsters have appeared three times.”

“.....”

Crockta dropped his head.

Tiyo complained, “Anyway... ohh... where is a city? A gnome doesn’t like this type of living style *dot*. ”

Tiyo gathered some twigs. It was preparation to start a fire.

“Really... I want to go to a beautiful city like Quantes... where you turn the faucet and water comes out *dot*... ” He complained while his body prepared to start cooking. They would camp here today. “Drake meat is tasteless but we have to eat it *dot*... ”

Tiyo used a dagger from Geherad to dismantle the drake. He didn’t need to disassemble all of it, so only a part of the belly was cut.

“I have to use spices... ”

He used the spices gathered from the various cities they visited. Tiyo’s cooking skill was the best — he had the two stage charm, consisting of a handsome face and good cooking skills.

Crockta and Anor nodded as they watched him work.

“I’m glad Tiyo is here... ”

The moment that Anor said this, something blocked their view.

“.....! ”

It filled their vision for a moment before disappearing.

“Ehh...?”

The body of the fallen drake had also vanished. Crockta's party stared at the place where the drake had been with wide eyes. Where did the massive drake corpse go? Fortunately, the slice of drake meat was still in Tiyo's hands.

“What was that?”

“Bird...” Crockta continued, “It was an enormous bird.”

Crockta saw it, the huge bird that had descended before flying off with the drake's body. The bird had a dark colored body and its wings seemed to slightly change color with every flap. A beautiful bird. The whole body was shining, the beak aimed at the targets were sharp and the eyes were bright blue.

The size was big enough to be a drake. It was incredibly fast. It appeared, grabbed the drake and disappeared in the blink of an eye. The speed was so rapid that it instantly caused confusion on the ground.

“Enormous bird...”

“There are many uncharted areas in the great forest, so it isn't strange for an unknown monster to appear. Tiyo explained. He continued to cook calmly.

“The bird, I didn't see it. How big is the bird?”

“Bigger than a drake.”

“What does it look like?”

“Well... a dark blue colour... a beautiful bird.”

“I want to see it. What is its name?”

“The thunderbird.”

“How do you know?”

“I have been tracking it.”

At that moment, a flash went through Anor's head. He thought the voice was Crockta at first, but it wasn't. Crockta was already pointing God Slayer in the direction of the voice. Anor slowly turned his head. A huge shadow covered his body. It wasn't a human.

"It has been a while. Newbie."

"Do I still look like a newbie?"

"Kulkulkulkul, you've become slightly bigger."

It was an orc with a huge bow. Crockta placed the sword on his back again and said, "This is the first time since then. Are you alive?"

"Of course. I heard your news as well. I am alive."

He extended his fist. The two fists touched.

"Bul'tar! It has been a while. Zankus."

The hunter who shot the sun, Zankus.

CHAPTER 189

KILL THE THUNDERBIRD (2)

Tiyo's skill was revealed with the drake meat dish. He boiled water in a large pot obtained in Geherad. Then he placed the drake meat and spices inside to make a stew. Boiled food was convenient when camping in the woods. They had been eating similar stews for a few days, but they didn't get tired of it due to the different spices that Tiyo put in.

Zankus admired the taste as he said, "The taste is good. Is that gnome friend a chef?"

"Huhu, men who cook are popular *dot*. I have a good body, can cook, and am intelligent! I'm not lacking anything *dot*."

He spooned up some more stew from the pot.

"There are a lot of things here. Do you always carry this big pot around?"

"Of course *dot*. This much is needed if you want delicious food! There is no cooking without it! It is all my hard work *dot!*"

"Amazing."

"...Excuse me." It was actually Crockta who carried the big pot, but Tiyo just shrugged.

Zankus asked Crockta, "I suppose you're going to Orcrox?"

"Yes," answered Crockta.

"Huhuhu, a long time has passed. The young warrior who wielded the sword..."

Zankus pulled something out of his bag. It was alcohol.

"Nowadays, you are a warrior sweeping through the continent that is now returning to save Orcrox."

Crockta received the cup with a smile. Tiyo and Anor also received cups. Then Zankus

poured one for himself. The alcohol was strong, which they could tell just from the smell. Anor was couldn't hold his alcohol, so he frowned at the smell.

"Zankus, will you go?"

"I have to go. I will go after catching the thunderbird."

Thunderbird, the giant bird that suddenly appeared and disappeared with the drake's body.

"Why are you trying to catch it?"

"In order to pay back a favor..." He said while drinking the alcohol. "You, didn't you meet Shakan?"

"Shakan?"

"Of course. Every hunter knows him. The last Shakan. The great hunter."

Crockta remembered Shakan, a great hunter who lived a long life and hated the behemoth. He ate the hearts of his prey and corrupted his body in order to fight the behemoth. In the end, he was able to hunt the behemoth and opened up the north. Shakan was a man who had a great influence on Crockta, just like Lenox and Hoyt did. He was someone who allowed Crockta to grow as a warrior.

"Did you know that Shakan once tried to hunt the thunderbird?"

"I didn't know that."

"But the thunderbird is still alive, meaning he also failed. When I asked him about the thunderbird, he told me not to dream of hunting it." Zankus looked at the sky like he was remembering it. "I always wanted to surpass Shakan, but he is dead. Now, this is the only way left to prove that I am a better hunter."

Hunt the thunderbird. This was the method Zankus had chosen to prove himself.

"I'll go to Orcrox after hunting the thunderbird."

Crockta nodded and said, "I understand."

"Therefore, I would like to hear more about Shakan and the behemoth. Please tell me."

"Kulkulkul, of course."

Crockta bumped cups with Zakan. They talked about Shakan. Tiyo interjected at the exciting parts. Anor didn't know Shakan so he just listened from the side.

The first strange meeting, Shakan showing the strength he gained to defeat the behemoth, dedicating everything he had to kill the behemoth until he eventually fell, they told Zankus everything they remembered. He was a man with an indomitable tenacity that really caused admiration.

Zankus smiled. "He really was the best hunter. He went that far and died a hunter. I want to live my life like him."

"I'm not a hunter but I agree."

"In the meantime, I've been running after his back. However, now he is gone. So I decided to surpass him by hunting the thunderbird. I'll hunt the prey that Shakan couldn't catch, then I can go my own way."

"You are already a well-regarded hunter. The hunter who shot down the sun, 'Zankus the Sun Killer'"

"That is a nickname. I know that I haven't reached Shakan yet." Zankus laughed.

They drank the alcohol again. Crockta quietly tilted the cup when the wind blew, making the edge of his red headband touch the alcohol. After fighting the empire, he had bought a new trademark red headband to place around his head.

"It is windy."

The wind was strong. A noise was gradually heard. They looked up at the sky. The black figure passed quickly.

"This?"

"The thunderbird showed up again."

The giant bird, clearly the thunderbird, flew elegantly in the sky while its dark blue

feathers scattered.

"It has started hunting again. I don't know what is going on, but this is a chance for me." Zankus got up. It was an unthinkable agility considering he just ate so much stew. Then he said to Crockta's group.

"Do you want to go with me?" He pointed in the direction of the thunderbird. "I have a good feeling today. This is a chance to see me succeed in hunting the thunderbird. How about it?"

He grinned.

Tiyo got up immediately. "Kahahat, a confident man. Good *dot*. Those skills, I will look at them with my own eyes!"

Crockta and Anor nodded in agreement with Tiyo. They got up and followed Zankus.



Zankus ran without any hesitation, like he already devised a way to track the thunderbird. He sometimes looked at the sky to determine the direction, but they couldn't figure out how.

"There are three trolls!" Zankus suddenly shouted. As he said, they headed forward a little bit and there were three trolls. They were surprised at the sudden appearance of an orc.

"I'll entrust this to you!"

Zankus jumped over them. Zankus overtook them with flexible movements, grabbed the branch of a tree and flew forward again using the rebound. It was an incredible stunt more suitable for an elf than an orc.

Tiyo, who followed Zamkus, also jumped up to mimic him.

"I'll leave it to you *dot*!"

Tiyo kicked against the ground. However, the jump wasn't strong enough. A troll's hard fist rose and struck Tiyo's abdomen.

"Cough!" Tiyo fell down. "I-I could've done it *dot...*"

Crockta pulled Tiyo up. Tiyo's face was red as he was filled with rage and shame at his failure. He immediately raised General.

"I would let these bastard trolls get away *dot!* You stay there! I will blow your heads off with General *dot!*" The trolls recoiled as they felt an unusual atmosphere from the little gnome. "It will be different now *dot!* Dieeeeeee!"

Tiyo rushed forward and fired General. When he reached the Pinnacle, he said he would go back to basics. So Tiyo abandoned the Vulcan form and used the old rifle form. He rolled roughly across the ground and shot the trolls in a sitting position.

Dadadadada!

The magic bullets hit the trolls. They failed to withstand the impact and fell over. Tiyo rushed forward immediately. The trolls were terrified by his violent appearance. Tiyo kicked against the ground. Then he jumped over them. It was a clean jump.

"Huhu, look *dot.* I eventually jumped over." Tiyo landed on the floor and praised his performance, looking back and raising a thumb. Then he spoke to the blankly staring Crockta and Anor. "Then, I'll leave it to you *dot!*"

Was that what he really wanted to do? Tiyo started running. He tried to grab the branches like Zankus, but eventually gave in.

"He is too excited."

"That's right."

Crockta and Anor shook their heads.

"Let's go."

They walked towards the fallen trolls. The trolls were stunned by Tiyo's General. They became terrified with the orc warrior approached. Crockta grinned. Then he jumped over them. He raised a thumb towards Anor.

"I'll leave it to you."

“.....”

Crockta also ran away. The trolls looked at the lone Anor. They were looking at Anor with eyes that sought sympathy.

Anor suddenly said, “A warrior doesn’t attack unarmed people!”

The trolls were bare-handed from the beginning, but Anor shouted it anyway. Then he ran after his party.

“...Kuock?”

“Kueeeeok.”

“Kuweeok.”

The three trolls looked at each other and sighed with relief. The great forest was truly a difficult place to live.



“Ohhhh! Look up *dot*!”

Crockta raised his head when he heard Crockta’s words. The thunderbird’s body was covering the sky. Its spread out wings filled their vision. But there was something else. The shape wriggling under the thunderbird was an ogre.

“It hunted an ogre *dot*!”

The ogre twisted in the thunderbird’s claws, like it was painful. The sharp claws became tighter. A perfect hunting skill. However, the thunderbird wasn’t in an ordinary state either. The thunderbird caught the ogre but it was struggling frantically in the air. Strong winds were sweeping around it.

“Why is the bird acting like that *dot*?”

“It is magic.”

“Magic?”

Zankus glanced at it with sharp eyes.

“Ogre wizard.”

“Oh, an ogre wizard *dot!*”

The ogre wizard that was mentioned last time really appeared. This meant there was a group of ogres near here.

“Look at the tail of the thunderbird.”

As Zankus said, a shining blue rope was wrapped around the thunderbird’s tail. It connected the thunderbird to the ground so that it couldn’t fly further.

“Kuaaaah!”

“Kuwaah!”

The roars of the ogres could be heard at the source of the rope.

“The thunderbird seems to have messed with the ogres.” Zankus was confused. “Strange. Why would a smart guy like that hit the ogres? Besides, it just grabbed the body of a drake. The rate of hunting food is too frequent...”

“Maybe it is hungry *dot.*”

“Hrmm...”

The thunderbird struggled in the sky and the rope made of magic power soon disappeared. The thunderbird flew high in the sky.

“It escaped... what is that *dot?*”

However, there was still a translucent line linked to the thunderbird.

“Tracking magic.”

The ogre wizard was tracking the whereabouts of the thunderbird. The translucent line followed the direction of the thunderbird.

"If we follow that, it will lead us to the thunderbird's nest."

"Then isn't the bird in danger *dot*?"

"Of course. It must've caught a pretty important ogre. The ogre wizard will trace it until the end."

Zankus raised a finger to his mouth and hid in the bushes. "Hide."

Crockta's group followed. Soon, a group of ogres appeared with a loud sound. They were running in the thunderbird's direction. It wasn't just one or two. There were dozens of ogres. It was the first time Crockta had seen so many ogres together. The ground shook like an earthquake was occurring.

"That is the ogre wizard."

Zankus pointed to the ogre in the vanguard. The wizard was holding a staff and his body was like a big ogre warrior, but lightning appeared around him every time he screamed. Once the ogres left, Tiyo stood up and asked.

"Zankus! Won't you lose your prey at this rate *dot*?" He exclaimed. "I didn't think you were a coward who would give up *dot*!"

Zankus laughed. A man who could speak such taunting words to Zankus was uncommon on this continent. He liked this little gnome.

"I understand, I'll show you." Zankus lowered his posture, his expression that of a merciless hunter. "I am the hunter Zankus."

He watched the running ogres.

"Thunderbirds and ogres, now you are all my prey."

CHAPTER 190

KILL THE THUNDERBIRD (3)

Zankus headed in a different direction from the ogres. Crockta's group followed him.

"Is this the right direction *dot*?"

"I don't know."

Zankus ran without looking back. Crockta gauged the direction. The ogres were traveling straight after the thunderbird, while Zankus was moving in a semicircle. Looking at Zankus's trajectory, he had already guessed where the thunderbird's nest was.

"Just follow Zankus."

At that moment, one ogre appeared. It seemed to be a straggler from the group. Their eyes met as the ogre showed its teeth. Crockta pulled out God Slayer. The ogre's head suddenly exploded as an arrow had passed over Crockta's head and penetrated the ogre's skull.

Zankus. Zankus, who was in the lead, turned and shot an arrow with the huge bow. The arrow was also big and looked like a spear. Tiyo stopped and looked around after the arrow hit. For Tiyo, it was really oversized.

"Coarse arrow *dot*."

The arrow turned round and round.

"I am also skilled in spear techniques!"

Zankus smiled and turned around. Crockta's group watched him before following again. They continued through the great forest. Then a mountain rose in the distance. It was a steep slope, as if someone had artificially created it. Ogres were climbing the bottom of this mountain

"Hrmm..."

Zankus loaded an arrow and watched the movements of the thunderbird. He seemed to be thinking about something.

"They are approaching."

The ogres climbed the mountain like ants. It was an amazing sight. Just a few ogres could cause a disaster in a city, but dozens of ogres had gathered to catch the thunderbird. A few cities would be destroyed if this group was released onto the continent.

"Thunderbird."

The thunderbird felt the crisis and flew warily around its nest. Gusts of wind blew when it flapped its wings, causing a few ogres to topple over.

"Kuwaaaaah!"

The angry ogre wizard roared. The thunderbird hurriedly flew higher but was hit by an unknown force. The thunderbird staggered as its feathers scattered every which way.

"They are nearing."

Zankus and Crockta's group approached the mountain while watching the battle. Suddenly, one ogre climbed to a flat area. The moment it was going to put its feet on the flat ground...

The thunderbird attacked the ogre. The ogre wielded a club. The huge bird and ogre tangled together. The thunderbird's claws shredded the ogre's body. However, the bloody ogre resisted until the end. The ogre wizard's magic tied up the thunderbird once again, allowing the ogre's club to hit it.

"The thunderbird is in danger *dot!*" Tiyo shouted while watching. Meanwhile, other ogres were on their way. Another ogre grabbed the tail feathers of the thunderbird. The thunderbird struggled wildly. The ogres fell down again.

The ogres persistently clung to the thunderbird. Like a swarm of ants, the ogres climbed onto the thunderbird's body. The ogres used their nails and teeth to harass the thunderbird. The ogres kept attacking.

“I don’t know why it is fighting the ogres...”

Thunderbirds were legendary because of their huge size, beautiful appearance and great speed, not for their strength in fighting. The thunderbird that he knew would’ve flown around snatching the one at a time, instead of tangling together like this.

“I’ll try to drop some.”

Zankus aimed his arrow. His arm muscles swelled up. The giant spear was pulled back to the fullest. Zankus’ archery was different from Shakan’s. He was like a cannon.

“Bul’tarrrr!”

Zankus pulled the bowstring back all the way and let go. The arrow burst out with a roar. It just the mountain just below where the thunderbird was struggling.

Kuaaaaaaang!

The whole mountain shook like there was an earthquake. The ogres barely clinging to the mountain fell at once. The rear collapsed and the bodies of the ogres poured down in layers. The ogres on the bottom were crushed and died. Most of the ogres approaching the thunderbird were washed away.

The thunderbird didn’t miss this opportunity and moved. The ogres clinging to it fell off. Once its wings were free, the thunderbird grabbed two ogres and flew into the sky. It rose to a high altitude and dropped the two ogres. The ogres crashed. Their bodies couldn’t withstand the shock of the fall and smashed to pieces.

The terrible shriek of the thunderbird echoed through the great forest. But the ogres didn’t give up and climbed the mountain again. The ogre wizard was screaming in anger while constantly sending magic towards the thunderbird. As lightning flashed, the thunderbird moved its wings and avoided the attacks. The two of them stared at each other and moved.

Despite the ogres’ persistent attack, the thunderbird flew around its nest without escaping.

Zankus watched it and said, “We must approach first.”

Then he rushed quickly without listening to Crockta’s reply, who followed with Tiyo.

“Uhhhh...”

However, Anor didn't have the strength to move anymore. The exhausted Anor stopped and caught his breath. He bowed his head and panted for a while.

“Excuse me...?”

But the group had already gone too far. Anor became despondent.

“More than this...”

Anor used his magic power as the power of a necromancer unfolded.

“Ah, this is?”

He stopped when he found what he was looking for. He put his hands together and concentrated his strength. The earth was disturbed and a bony wing popped out. Anor used the power of a necromancer to revive an animal that died not long ago, in order to ride it.

The shape was soon revealed. The owner of the wings that let out an eerie cry!

‘Chirpppp... chirpppp...’

An undead sparrow. The sparrow flew and sat on Anor's shoulder.

‘Chirpppppppp...’

Anor dropped his arms. The cry was eerier, but it was a cute bone sparrow.

“Ah, I don't know.”

Anor just sat down. The sparrow kept on chirping on Anor's head.



Zankus approached the rear of the thunderbird's nest. Some of the ogres exploded because of his arrow. His bow was destructive. Zankus retried the arrows and carried them on his back again. Rather than an archer carrying arrows, he looked like a warrior with multiple spears.

"Go this way." The thunderbird was distracted by the ogres and wasn't paying attention to this side. "I will go up my own way. If you are confident, you can imitate me."

Zankus threw his huge arrow and stuck it in the rock wall. Then he jumped up. The arrow bent and he used the recoil to fly up into the sky.

"Ouh!"

".....!"

He used the tremendous jump and quickly reached a high place. He placed his hand in a rough niche and grabbed on.

"Amazing."

He climbed up the cliff wall like a spider. He measured his position and where he wanted to go, then immediately jumped up.

"Okay, me too!"

Tiyo jumped on top of the arrow after Zankus. Tiyo bent down and jumped upwards. His body was light, so he could fly much higher than Zankus. His body was small but he climbed quickly. It was a curious sight. The figures of Zankus and Tiyo became smaller.

"Now it is my turn."

Crockta wiped his nose and jumped on the arrow.

Kwajijik!

But due to the shock that piled up, the part of the rock that the arrow was stabbed in fell down. Crockta also fell.

"Cough!"

His body hit the ground and clouds of dust flew into the air. After a while, the dirt covered Crockta rose.

“Kyahahahahahat!”

Tiyo’s mocking laugh rang out from above.

“Kulkul, kulkulkulkul.” Crockta laughed and said, “I’m angry.”

Crockta glared at the rock. The angry Crockta didn’t use any tricks. He faced the opponent head on. He stuck to the wall like a cicada. Then he started to climb up using his hands and legs. The angry Crockta’s grip was tight as he found corners to support him. It was an unstoppable climb, like there was something sticky on his hands.

Zankus and Tiyo felt an unknown crisis as Crockta climbed the rock like crazy.

“Ohhhhhh!”

“Slow down, s-scary dot!”

“Ohhhhhh!”

“The rock is shaking dot!”

Tiyo and Zankus moved faster as they felt like a monster was chasing them from behind. They soon reached the slope. The torn flesh of the ogres was scattered all over the place. If they kept climbing up, they would reach the thunderbird’s nest. However, the field of view was so clear that they couldn’t avoid being seen by the thunderbird.

The thunderbird already noticed their presence, but it only glanced at Zankus and Tiyo while facing the ogres.

“Weren’t you going to hunt it? It looks okay now.”

Crockta stepped on the slope and asked. It was the perfect timing. The thunderbird wasn’t paying attention to Zankus because it was fighting the ogres. If he aimed for a gap, the thunderbird wouldn’t be able to avoid it.

“I’ll put it off for the moment.” Zankus looked up. He was looking at the thunderbird’s nest on top of the steep mountain. “There is something I want to check.”

Then Zankus once again loaded his arrow. If Crockta’s God Slayer was a greatsword, his bow was a ballista. He fired the arrow. The goal wasn’t the thunderbird. Ogre

wizard. The huge arrow hit the ogre wizard's shoulder. In the aftermath, the ogre wizard collapsed to the ground. Blood flowed from the wounded area. The ogre wizard roared angrily.

"Kuwaaaaah!"

The ogre wizard became crazy and started to attack the thunderbird with all its power. The ogre wizard wanted to kill everyone on this mountain. It aimed a spell towards the thunderbird. The thunderbird rose and then plummeted towards the ogre wizard.

The ogres clung to the thunderbird. The ogre wizard's magic power burned the target, not distinguishing between ogres and the thunderbird. The ogres were torn apart by the thunderbird's claws and wings. Blood splashed and lightning flashed.

It was a melee.

"Let's go up."

Zankus distracted the thunderbird and started climbing again. His speed increased.



The summit of the mountain. They reached the place where the thunderbird's nest was located.

"Here *dot!*"

Tiyo pointed to a cave. It was a space that the thunderbird had carved out directly. It was a nesting place that was protected from bad weather by a hard outer wall.

"Why did we come here *dot?*"

"Shh." Zankus raised a finger to his mouth.

".....?"

"This..."

A sound was coming from the nest. Crockta and Tiyo listened carefully.

Crockta asked in a small voice, "Did you know?"

"I just guessed."

They entered the cave. An unexpected sight greeted them.

CHAPTER 191

KILL THE THUNDERBIRD (4)

The young thunderbirds were crying. There seemed to be 10 of them. Thunderbirds were the size of a house. Therefore, the young chicks already reached the chest of an adult human. Crockta was perplexed as the young chicks with beautiful feathers looked up at them with clear eyes.

“There are young thunderbirds.”

“Cute *dot*....”

They were similar in height to Tiyo. As Tiyo approached, the thunderbirds looked at him and made a curious sound. Tiyo cried out when he was lifted up by one chick. The other thunderbird chick beside it rubbed its beak against Tiyo with a pure appearance of no hostility.

“Uh?” Tiyo suddenly flinched. Blood flowed from the beak and stained Tiyo’s clothing.

“It seems like they just ate.”

Zankus pointed to one side. There were the bodies of monsters such as ogres and trolls, as well as the stolen drake. The bodies were torn in places.

“This is why the hunting cycle was sped up.”

There were 10 chicks. They were currently smaller than an adult, but they would soon grow to the size of the mother thunderbird, requiring a huge amount of food.

“Then the thunderbird is fighting the ogres because of her chicks *dot*.”

“I guess so.”

The thunderbird took risks in hunting and fighting the ogres head on in order to protect her young. The chicks didn’t know about their mother’s efforts as they approached the strange visitors and poked them with their beaks. As Crockta stroked a chick’s head, it spread open its wings and rubbed its body against his legs. They were

very friendly.

"Thunderbirds live for 1,000 years," said Zankus as he gazed at a young thunderbird. "In addition, the eggs of a thunderbird needs a very long time to hatch. Thunderbirds keep their eggs in a safe and warm place, waiting a long time until they are hatched."

Suddenly, Zankus began to laugh. Crockta, Tiyo, and the young thunderbirds stared at him.

"I followed the thunderbird in order to surpass Shakan. But I once again realize what a great hunter he was."

Zankus pointed to the entrance of the thunderbird nest. It was a place they hadn't looked at. As the sun got lower, sunlight poured into the nest. At the same time, shapes appeared on the rock wall near the entrance.

They were letters. Someone had carved letters on the rock. It had been weathered over the years, but the words could still be recognized. Crockta and Tiyo realized who it was. The traces of a man they could never forget.

[I am a descendant of the Shakan and an unnamed hunter. I leave this here for the hunters of the next generation. A true hunter never hunts the young. Thunderbirds live for 1,000 years and have to wait 100 years for their eggs to hatch.

Just the fact that you came here means you have succeeded in hunting the thunderbird. These rare birds shouldn't be extinguished from history. We hunters should turn away.]

Shakan hadn't failed in hunting the thunderbird. He knew that the thunderbird was guarding the eggs and turned away without any regrets. It wasn't just Shakan. Other marks were seen under the sentence left by Shakan.

[I am Prairie Hunter Abudai. I respect Shakan's will.]

[I am the dark elf Hikade. Please let the mother mother bird see the fruits of her labor.]

[I am Albulla, the world's strongest hunter! Today I will show mercy.]

[I miss my wife and children. Hunter Joffrey, I will finish my hunting and return home.]

[Wow There are 12 eggs. Take care of your children well, Thunderbird! Hunter William.]

Since then, several hunters had come to this point, leaving their mark before turning away. A rare species hardly ever seen on the continent, the thunderbird with beautiful dark blue wings. Other hunters reached this point, but they stopped hunting to honor Shakan's will and to protect the mother and her eggs.

The words they left on the rock were shining brightly in the sunlight. Shakan's words were getting weathered, but the traces of the other hunters were clear. Some were great hunters that Zankus knew about.

"The way they came here is different, but the point they reached is the same."

The best hunters who had the ability to break through the great forest and reach the thunderbird's nest. They all felt the same thing here. Zankus met Crockta and Tiyo's gaze as they knew what they had to do now.

"Huhu, I actually liked the thunderbird from the beginning *dot*."

"Your muzzle was aiming at it."

"It is a type of greeting *dot*."

They separated from the chicks clinging to them and left the thunderbird's nest. The cries of the thunderbird could be heard from below.



Crockta's group climbed down the rock wall without a hitch. The thunderbird was flying into the sky and dropping ogres, while fighting the ogre wizard as well. Many feathers had fallen and blood was flowing down.

Crockta grabbed God Slayer.

"I'm sorry for the ogres."

He measured the distance. He targeted an enemy.

"Bul'tarrrr!"

Crockta jumped off the rock without hesitation. God Slayer descended on the ogre. Flesh scattered. Ogre Slayer was now God Slayer. Even an ogre was a light opponent for God Slayer. If he caught a chicken with the blade, the poor chicken would be shattered.

God Slayer struck and the ogre died with a gruesome scream. The ogre wizard was confused and recoiled from the enemies that appeared above. At that time, a giant spear flew and skewered the ogres near the ogre wizard.

The ogres shrieked.

“Kuwaaaaah!”

It was Zankus’ arrow. Once the ogres stopped, the suffering thunderbird rose up in the sky. She was bewildered by Crockta’s group suddenly helping her.

There were dozens of ogres. However, Crockta, Tiyo, and Zankus defeated them without a hitch. The golden blade shone and huge arrows bombarded them. The magic bullets flying from Tiyo obstructed any ogres that dared to attack.

The thunderbird also descended and started attacking the ogres again. She clawed at an ogre aiming at Crockta’s back. Crockta raised his thumbs in thanks, causing the thunderbird to flap her wings.

“Kuwaaah!”

“Uwoooo!”

“Kuaaack!”

The ogres screamed at each other once the situation suddenly changed. Then there was a roar from the ogre wizard.

“Kuaaaaaaaaah!”

They didn’t know what it meant, but it sounded like a retreat order. The ogre showed their backs and started to run away. Crockta put away his greatsword. The ogres disappeared without looking back. It was a quick retreat that made it hard to believe a terrible battle had just taken place. The noise of battle disappeared as calmness once again blanketed the great forest. Only the corpses of the ogres were scattered all over

the place.

The thunderbird slowly landed on the ground.

“Kkiiik...”

The thunderbird looked even more beautiful up close. As if she understood them, she stared at Crockta’s group with clear eyes. Zankus approached the thunderbird. The thunderbird lowered her head. The two looked at each other for a while.

Zankus reached out his hand. The thunderbird extended its beak. Zankus stroked the beak. There were scars and blood from the battle. The thunderbird’s beak gently touched Zankus’ body. Both of them had a rapport after confirming there was no hostility towards each other.

The thunderbird lowered her body. Then she made a sound. He didn’t know what it meant at first, but then realized she was telling him to get on her back. Zankus climbed onto the thunderbird first. Crockta and Tiyo followed. Although their posture was unstable, Zankus grabbed the thunderbird’s neck, Crockta held Zankus and Tiyo held Crockta.

“Kkiiik!”

The thunderbird took off. The earth became far away in an instant. The thunderbird circled around her nest. Everything in the great forest seemed like a toy. The fighting creatures, the resting creatures, the small birds, everything was below them.

The afternoon sun was falling. Crockta enjoyed the air rushing past his body as he gazed at the endless green landscape stretching out before him.

He was here. He lived in the world of Elder Lord.

“Bul’tar.”

They enjoyed the scenery for a while. Was the thunderbird always seeing such sights?

“Beautiful dot.”

“I completely agree.”

The thunderbird flapped her wings, as if in agreement. The thunderbird descended. They landed at the thunderbird's nest. The chicks appeared to welcome their mother. They jumped clumsily at their mother. The thunderbird spread her wings and covered all of her chicks.

From their positions, Crockta's group could see the blood and scars on the thunderbird's back and wings. The chicks didn't know. How hard the mother thunderbird's day was today. How she found food for them and rescued them. The bodies outside were living their lives until yesterday.

Crockta turned and looked outside. The sun was setting. It was a beautiful twilight. Looking at this magnificent sight, Crockta thought that the world was too big. Everyone was living desperately in it. They had their own unique lives.

Tiyo stood next to Crockta.

"Today has passed *dot*."

The glow of the sunlight reached this place. The rock wall at the entrance of the nest shone. It made the traces of Shakan and the other hunters who came here more prominent.

"There is an empty spot." Zankus said. Then he approached the rock. "How about it?"

Crockta and Tiyo smiled and nodded.

Zankus pulled out an arrow. Shakan's traces, and those of the hunters after him. He placed the arrowhead on it. Zankus moved his hand. He started to carve deep and sharp letters.

[In honor of the greatest hunter, Shakan.]

[Hunter Zankus.]

Then his hand stopped moving. Crockta received the arrow next. He took it and wrote,

[Warrior Crockta.]

Then it was Tiyo's turn.

[Manly Tiyo.]

The three of them laughed heartily at the sight.

At that moment.

Rustle.

They reacted to the sudden sound. Then a brown hand appeared at the entrance of the nest. The hand shook for a moment before another hand appeared. The owner of the hand slowly pulled himself up. It was dangerous but he eventually reached the nest.

“Pant... pant...”

The bone sparrow on his head cried out awkwardly.

‘Chirpppppp...’

It was Anor. He had been walking here while they fought the ogres and enjoyed the stunning scenery from the thunderbird’s back. He could barely move at this point.

“Pant... pant...”

Anor flopped down. He wasn’t in a normal state. His whole body was soaked with sweat. He staggered and fell down.

“You managed to climb up *dot*.”

Tiyo laughed and added letters next to his name.

[Weakling Anor.]

Suddenly, a young thunderbird approached Crockta, crying out with a desire to play. Crockta cuddled with the young thunderbird. Then he looked again at the traces they left behind.

[In honor of the greatest hunter, Shakan.

Hunter Zankus. Warrior Crockta. Manly Tiyo. Weakling Anor.]

The great forest was filled with many dangerous creatures. The thunderbird's nest that was located in the harshest place. There was a special guestbook shared by the hunters who reached this place. Their names had been added.

CHAPTER 192

THE SWAMP (1)

The thunderbird took Crockta's party on her back in return for their help. She flew a considerable distance, saving them a lot of time. However, she landed once she reached a certain area.

"Can't you fly a bit more *dot*?"

However, the thunderbird shook her head. The thunderbird raised her beak and pointed to the front, letting out a loud cry.

"What is she saying *dot*?"

"There seems to be something dangerous," said Zankus. Because he was a hunter, he had the ability to decipher the meaning of animals to a certain extent. "You can't help us here, so please go back."

"What *dot*?"

They looked at the great forest in front of them. It was a dark place. There were many shaded areas in the great forest that blocked the sun, but the area in front of them seemed more than that. The air was damp and sticky.

"Once we pass through here, we will be in front of Orcrox," Zankus said to Crockta, Tiyo and Anor. "Going around will take a while. What do you want to do?"

The answer had already been set.

"Of course, go straight through."

"Don't go back *dot*!"

Anor tried to express his opinion about going around. However, the bone sparrow riding on Anor's head replied instead.

'Chirpppppp...!'

Anor gazed at the bone sparrow with amazement. The bone sparrow expressed its enthusiasm through the flapping of its wings, as if it were already assimilated with Crockta and Tiyo.

"This guy is better than Anor *dot!* Let's go, Sparrow!"

'Chirpppppp...!'

The thunderbird lightly waved her wings at them. It was time to say goodbye. The thunderbird showed intimacy by rubbing her beak against every member of Crockta's group. They stroked the thunderbird's beak and feathers, pledging to meet her again.

"Thunderbird. Live happily with your children *dot.*"

"Kkiiik..."

The thunderbird nodded. Then she slowly started to fly upwards. The flapping of the thunderbird's wings caused gusts of wind to appear. However, it wasn't a rough blast like when she fought. It was a cool, gentle wind that pushed at their backs. The thunderbird spread her beautiful dark blue wings. She cried loudly before returning to her nest.

Crockta's group waved at the thunderbird.

"Then it is time to enter *dot.*"

They turned at Tiyo's words. A gloomy forest appeared. The ground was wet, like it was a swamp.

"Be careful."

Zankus lowered his posture and loaded an arrow. Crockta's group looked into the dark forest at his sudden action. Was there something there? Zankus fired the arrow. The arrow penetrated through the air and struck something in the darkness of the forest.

"Kieeeeeek!"

A terrible scream was heard. It was a snake. A giant snake hiding in the bushes was bleeding from Zankus' arrow. It had completely camouflaged with the surrounding area, but it became visible when it twisted its body after being hit by Zankus' arrow.

"There was something like this, right at the entrance."

The snake wriggled and revealed itself. It was huge. The monster was a size that seemed like it could easily kill them. However, Crockta's group wasn't easy. Tiyo nodded and pulled out General.

"Good *dot*. I can make a snake dish. Snake meat is good for the body *dot*!"

Anor was confused. "Snakes are good for the body?"

"Indeed *dot*! Great *dot*!"

"How is it good?"

"That... good... I have no way to explain it *dot*..."

Thus, they entered the swamp of the great forest.



The paladin of the war god, Aklan prayed as he looked at the volunteers.

"Everything is going according to the will of the god of war."

Once the divine message was spread, ordinary people gathered to obey the gods' will. Many also joined the army in hopes of honor and rewards. Nobles who wanted to consolidate their positions also participated.

Now it was time to leave. Aklan gestured and the flag went up. It was the flag of all the gods in the empire. The expedition members prayed to the gods they believed in.

"Depart."

The horn blew again. The troops moved forward. The number was much larger than the empire's fixed army. In the future, more people would join as the procession progressed. From the empire in the south to Orcrox in the north-west, the expedition would snowball in size as more people joined.

Adandator spoke to Aklan, "We need supplies for all these people."

"Yes. I have requested cooperation from the Blacksmith Company."

The expedition had already requested the support of the top merchant company on the continent, the Blacksmith Company.

"We have plenty of money, so we can get what they need through their trading network."

"Good."

"First of all, let's go to Maillard and negotiate further."

They were heading towards Maillard. They would pass countless cities on the way to Orcrox. The expedition would become more solid after passing through those cities.

Aklan looked around. An endless crowd followed him.

"The Free Cities Alliance has refused to participate. Stupid fellows. The rejection of all the temples on the continent will catch their ankles in the future."



Maillard was unable to hide their confusion.

Suddenly, a large expedition army had reached out to them, urging them to join.

It was a well-known fact that a divine message had been sent down. However, Maillard didn't plan to provide support on a city scale. They separated the work of the temple from the work of the city. The citizens themselves followed different gods and faith was left as a personal freedom. Now a large expedition from the empire was asking for their help.

"All gods are watching, including the world tree of the elves," Aklan declared.

All of Maillard's senators thought about it. They invited Aklan to the congress in order to listen to his story and make a decision.

"Paladin Aklan." Maillard's mayor touched his chin and asked, "Your target is Crockta and the orcs, right?"

"Yes, they are using forbidden power. If we leave it alone, the entire continent will be in grave danger."

"Grave danger..."

Another senator sitting around the platform asked Aklan.

"What evidence?"

"Evidence?"

"What is the evidence that Crockta and the orcs are using a forbidden power?"

"It is a divine message. Every god has told me to get rid of them, and as I continued to pray to the god of war, I truly believe that they are very dangerous."

"The god of war is originally a god who promotes war... hasn't this happened before? The humans and elves fought."

The god of war was someone who favored war and fighting, and he grew through his believers. It was said that he directly reaped dead souls from the battlefield. There had been trouble between humans and elves in the past. It wasn't a big war, but many people fought and died. It became known that the god of war was behind it, and the temple of the war god was criticized for a while.

"Encouraging war..."

Everyone thought that Aklan would be angry. But Aklan was calm.

"If you think so, please consider the other gods. It isn't just the war god. All of the gods are saying this. Isn't that right? Maillard has a temple so I'm sure that you know already. That alone is evidence."

"Hrmm..."

The senator touched his chin.

Aklan looked around. There were around 30 people in the not very large space looking at him. Most of them were elves and humans. They represented citizens from all walks of life in Maillard. It was entirely different from the empire ruled by the emperor and

nobles. There might be others who considered it as good, but Aklan considered it inefficient since the decision-making was split. This simple matter was being delayed because of it.

Aklan threw out one more thing, “Of course, it isn’t just a matter of faith. Crockta and the orcs are public enemies, so anything obtained from defeating them will be fairly divided. Don’t worry about that.”

“.....”

“The price won’t be small.”

Suddenly, Aklan felt a strange atmosphere. He thought it was just a formal and tiring process. However, based on their expressions, it seemed like they wanted to refuse it. What was the reason for their refusal?

“Paladin Aklan. I’ve heard your words well.” The mayor spoke to clean up the situation.
“Do you know about Maillard?”

“I don’t know.”

“I see...” The mayor smiled and said. “Then do you know the group called the Rehabilitation Brothers?”

It was the first time he heard such a silly name.

“This is the first time.”

“Then I will explain. The Rehabilitation Brothers are a volunteer group in Maillard. They suddenly appeared one day, helping the poor and sick without any costs. If there are any criminals, they will hand them directly over to the guards. They dedicated themselves to Maillard.”

Aklan nodded, “They are excellent people.”

“I agree. As mayor, I am very grateful to them. Then...” The mayor shrugged. “This volunteer group originated from Crockta.”

“Huh?”

"The three leaders of the Rehabilitation Brothers are ex-convicts who had been healed by Crockta. In the old days, they were very bad people who hurt security. However, they were born again as new men after meeting Crockta. In addition, there are several orc members in the Rehabilitation Brothers, all of whom are doing good work out to respect for Crockta."

Akhan's eyes widened. It was a fact he hadn't known at all. Crockta conquered the north and then came down to fight the empire. He was a fiercely strong warrior. No further information was available.

"Now the Rehabilitation Brothers are a symbol of Maillard. Thanks to them, inspired citizens have started to look after their neighbors and the city is becoming a better place to live."

The silent senators nodded and began to open their lives.

"The children in the slums of Maillard are now going to school."

"The beggars in the city are gone."

"The fountain square is full and the water is overflowing. When people throw a coin into the fountain, the temple collects it and helps those who are in need."

"The crime rate has plummeted sharply."

"There was a Rehabilitation Brothers member hit by a carriage while saving a child. I'm glad that he was a cursed person."

Akhan realized. These people weren't hostile to Crockta and the orcs. No, they liked them.

The mayor continued speaking, "I explained this so that you would know. We in Maillard make all important decisions through the votes of the senators. Your request will be accepted if a majority of the votes agree. Then I will start."

The mayor rose from his seat.

"Distinguished members of Maillard's congress. The expedition is asking for Maillard's participation and support. For more information, please read the details on the documents given to you. I believe you would've read all of it. All those in favor, please

raise your hands.”

He called for people to raise their hands. The mayor looked around at the senators. Three people had raised their hands. They had devout expression on their faces. However, the remaining members were looking at Aklan with firm expressions.

“Three people. Any more? Three people. Three people are in favor.”

The mayor turned and looked at Aklan. Then he spoke again, “If you are opposed to this motion, please raise your hands.”

There was no need to count. Everyone save for three people raised their hands. Aklan dropped his head, unable to withstand their gazes.

The mayor immediately spoke to Aklan without counting the number of votes, “The proposal has been rejected. Maillard is a city that guarantees civil freedom, so I won’t stop citizens for volunteering for the expedition if that is what they want. You may recruit volunteers from Maillard, but Maillard won’t support the expedition at a city level.”

The senators clapped. As he listened to the applause that sounded close to booing, Aklan barely managed to open his mouth in reply, “I understand, thank you for your consideration.”

Thus, he had to turn around. He tried to recruit volunteers from the square, but none of the Maillard citizens joined the expedition. Rather, he only received the glares of the citizens. The heavy steps of the expedition troops headed for the next city, after not gaining anything in Maillard.

Aklan examined a map. Beyond the small villages and towns, there was a place equal to Maillard.

“Let’s go here. The scale is quite big. We will try again there. Most of the residents are humans. There will definitely be results there.”

“What place is it?”

“A place called Chesswood.”

CHAPTER 193

THE SWAMP (2)

The snake that was hit by Zankus' arrow disappeared into the swamp forest. Only a red blood stain remained where the snake was. Crockta's group gazed at the place where the snake disappeared and then looked at each other. It was a humid place that gave off an eerie feeling.

"Should we continue *dot*?"

"Where else should we go?"

"Call back the thunderbird..."

'Chirpppppppp...!'

"....."

Crockta cleared his throat and stepped forward first. He realized it when he took the first step. His boots sank down a little bit. It was slippery mud, but not enough to stop them from walking.

"We can walk." He stepped into the forest with all his weight. "It feels bad."

The air was humid. It felt like poisonous insects would appear out of nowhere. Crockta walked a few steps and waved his hand. He watched the place where the snake was hiding. The serpent's blood remained and the bark and vegetation that it touched was being corroded away. It was an awful poison.

"The serpent." Crockta looked back at the party and said, "Let's pass through it quickly. Be careful."

However, their expressions weren't bright. Rather, they seemed surprised. Tiyo pointed to Crockta with his mouth open. Crockta shrugged and said, "What? Is everybody scared? Only this much..."

Dduk.

Suddenly, something fell on his shoulders. Crockta raised his head.

Shaaaah-!

A giant snake's mouth was wide up open towards Crockta. Venom was dripping from the sharp fangs. Crockta was so surprised that he couldn't make a sound. The snake gradually approached. Poison dripped from its fangs. Crockta couldn't express his surprise but instinctively swung his sword.

"Waaahhhhhhhh!"

The moment he wielded God Slayer,

Shaaaah!

The snake was frightened and twisted its head but it ended up slashed in half. Crockta hurriedly avoided it, but it was inevitable that some blood touched his body. Pain radiated from where the poisonous blood had hit.

Crockta hurriedly rushed away from the radius of the dying snake. He touched his shoulder. The skin was melted due to the poisonous liquid. The poison continued to cause pain. His face distorted.

"Kuk, this snake bastard..."

Pain and anger jumbled together. He lifted God Slayer and slashed the snake again and again. The snake was eventually cut into dozens of pieces.

"Pant, pant."

Crockta took deep breaths. Tiyo carefully approached and asked, "A-are you okay dot...?"

"The place where the poison touched it a little painful."

"Poison? I have no knowledge about poison dot."

Zankus spoke, "Show me your shoulders."

A hunter probably knew about different types of serpents. He looked at both the

snake's body and Crockta's shoulder before pulling something out.

"Oh, is there an antidote *dot*?"

"It isn't an antidote but any experienced hunter would know..."

It was a potion.

"Potions are the best."

Zankus sprinkled the potion on Crockta's shoulder. Then the pain began. Potions were truly the best against poison.

"Indeed, potions are the best."

"It is a good idea to buy a lot when there is a discount."

"I will remember that."

Crockta sprinkled potions on every painful spot on his body.

"Anyway, it isn't easy." Zankus looked at the forest and said. There were two huge snakes from the beginning. In addition, they had terrible poison. It would be dangerous. However, nobody said to go back.

"Break through the front. That is our way *dot*."

Tiyo lifted General in a ready stance and moved forward. Crockta, Zankus, and Anor followed. After entering the swamp, the ecology had completely changed. The animals and creatures had disappeared, leaving only strange insects and plants that they saw for the first time.

"This is a more dangerous place than the ogres' habitat in the great forest."

The dangers in this swamp went beyond the level of being threatened by ogres. It wasn't a physical threat, but the insects and unknown ecology weren't something Crockta's group had experienced before. A snake biting them out of nowhere was scarier than a dozen ogres.

"Be careful..."

Tiyo and Crockta took the lead, Anor was in the middle and Zankus followed in the rear. Crockta gazed at the shaded forest and walked carefully. The mud of the swamp grabbed at their feet with every step.

“Crockta, to the right!”

All of a sudden, Zankus shouted. Crockta immediately pulled out his greatsword and swung it to the right.

“Kuaaaang!”

This time, it was a leopard. Patterns covered its entire body. Once the surprise attack failed, the leopard landed on the ground and gazed at Crockta.

“A leopard is attacking me.”

Crockta laughed. He was a friend of the great tiger Simba, the king of the forest.

“Get lost. Then I will spare your life.”

Perhaps it felt the terrible pressure coming from Crockta, but the leopard started to flee. It was at that moment. On the floor where nothing seemed to be present, something bit the leopard. The long and fat body entwined around the leopard in a flash.

It was a snake. The leopard was unable to resist and became the snake's prey. The snake bit the leopard and then looked at Crockta's group. Crockta's mouth twisted as he lifted God Slayer. The snake realized it couldn't afford to go against them and turned away. The leopard's dead body disappeared somewhere along with the snake.

“This is a really dangerous place.”

A place where camouflaged enemies awaited their prey. That was this place, the swamp.

“Wait a minute.” Anor said, telling them to shut up. “From the snake who just left...”

Before Anor could finish speaking, the sparrow on his head flew to a certain place. It was the direction that the snake had disappeared in.

“What *dot*? Did you send it?”

“No. It is moving at will.”

“What *dot*? ”

“Well, I can feel something from the direction that the snake left in.” Anor looked in that direction with a determined face. “There is something there. I don’t know exactly what.”

“It is something related to a necromancer, perhaps a dungeon or artifact.”

Zankus nodded. Tiyo shouted.

“Okay, then we should go there *dot*!”

“I wonder what will happen.”

“Kulkulkul, it is a new adventure.”

Anor was baffled, “No, I mean, it will be dangerous...”

“Anor! Let’s go *dot*! Lead the way!”

“I was saying be careful and don’t go...”

“Guide us *dot*!”



They went through the swamp for a while. Zankus examined the tracks on the ground; his hunter’s eyes found signs of snakes in many places. The snakes were heading in the direction that Anor felt the power.

“What will it be *dot*? Perhaps you are just imagining it?”

“No. There is definitely something.”

Crockta looked around. In fact, he also felt something. The Demon’s Mouth around his waist was rattling. It hadn’t woken up in a while. The guy inside was still asleep, but

the belt was dragging him in the same direction as Anor's feeling. It felt like he was being pulled. There was a feeling that something might be on the other end.

"There."

And there really was something.

A stone pyramid greeted them. It was covered with moss and bushes, but it was definitely a pyramid. The scale was greater than they imagined. The snake they pursued was also near the pyramid. In addition to that, there were several snakes crawling around the pyramid.

"There must be something in that pyramid." Zankus was already giving an interested smile. "The entrance is there. Is it locked?"

There was a doorway under the pyramid, but it was firmly closed. Crockta's companions exchanged glances and approached. The snakes realized there were intruders and raised their heads. Their forked tongues hissed at Crockta's group.

Crockta pulled out God Slayer. The snakes' heads reared back. As Crockta pointed the big sword at them, the snakes couldn't get closer.

"Smart guys."

The serpents stared at them as they stood at the entrance. Zankus grabbed the door handle and pulled. It was firmly locked.

"It won't open."

Tiyo and Anor also pulled once, but it didn't open. Zankus examined the door. It was built firmly and no gaps could be seen. Crockta went forward.

"I'll open it."

Tiyo shook his head.

"It is a locked door. You can't open this..."

Sururung!

Crockta moved his hand and the door opened with a grinding sound. Everyone was surprised when it opened so easily.

“How...?”

“No way.”

Zankus nodded.

“The door seems to have magic that judges people based on whether they are qualified or not.”

“Qualified?”

“It might be a place for Crockta.”

They all looked at Crockta. His companions always forgot, but Crockta was a fearsome warrior who won against the great chieftain in the north and defeated the empire’s large army alone. He wasn’t an ordinary orc. The pyramid acknowledged Crockta.

Crockta coughed.

“Hmm, let’s enter.”

The admiration of the party continued.

“Truly Crockta... my companion *dot!*”

“Amazing.”

“Kulkul, this child has become like this...”

Crockta ignored them, moving forward while muttering, “If pulling doesn’t work, push the door...”



The pyramid was in the center of a humid swamp, but the interior was completely dry. It was rather dry. What was this place? The snakes had hovered around, as if they were guarding the pyramid. They had to be guarding something.

“Do you still feel it?”

Crockta asked Anor. Anor nodded. He looked around the pyramid, as if he were trying to pick up that energy. Crockta also felt the Demon’s Mouth responding at his waist. Something existed here that had to do with both necromancy and the Demon’s Mouth.

“There doesn’t seem to be anything dangerous.”

Crockta placed God Slayer back on his back. There were no snakes or insects inside the pyramid. The monsters guarding dungeons couldn’t be seen. They kept moving forward.

Suddenly, Zankus said, “Strange.”

“What are you saying *dot*? ”

“We’ve been walking for a long time.”

“That’s right *dot*. ”

“Was the pyramid that big? ”

“.....! ”

They had walked in a straight line from the entrance. The pyramid wasn’t small, but they shouldn’t have been walking so long. However, they had already been walking for a long time. Zankus placed the light he was holding on to the ground and measured something.

“Is it going downhill? ”

Crockta asked? As he said, the ground was at a slight slope that was leading underground. If so, it was possible for them to walk that long.

Zankus shook his head. “It doesn’t seem like it.”

“Then...”

“Something is going on.”

Crockta looked at the end of the passage. The Demon's Mouth at his waist kept pulling him. There was something at the end of this path.

"Keep going. What will be in here?"

"Go dot!"

They kept walking. At the end of the passage, a large space appeared. The ceiling was high and something unknown was emitting a light. However, the glow wasn't blinding. The light source illuminated the inside of the space so that they could see clearly, but it was calm enough that they could open their eyes.

At that moment, "Who are you?"

Crockta's group turned towards the voice. A man was looking at them. The man was impeccably dressed and didn't seem to suit the pyramid.

"An orc and gnome. A dark elf..."

But Crockta could see it. There was a tail coming from the back of the man's suit. The tail resembled a scorpion's and the tip was sharp.

"I will start the introductions. My name is Abaddon. You are uninvited guests, but I would like to welcome you to this place."

CHAPTER 194

THE SWAMP (3)

“We are travelers passing by. What are you doing in this place?”

“It isn’t very polite, coming in here and asking this.” Abaddon said with a smile. Crockta didn’t miss the scorpion-like tail shaking at his feet. He was wearing a suit and pretending to be a gentleman, but he clearly wasn’t. It was dangerous to be in such a suspicious pyramid.

“We couldn’t come in?” Zankus stepped forward and said. “Nonsense. The pyramid accepted Crockta over here. It is hard to say that we’re uninvited guests.”

Crockta’s face turned red. They had pulled the door and he pushed it open. He ignored it because he liked the praise, but his companions still believed in ‘Crockta is qualified.’

Abaddon hesitated like he was confused. “The pyramid accepted him, what does that mean?”

Tiyo explained.

“Literally. The entrance to the pyramid was firmly locked, but Crockta appeared, grabbed the handle, and the door opened, as if it had accepted his qualifications *dot!* The sealed door opened *dot!* You are the one maintaining this pyramid, but Crockta was accepted by it! He isn’t an uninvited guest, but a warrior recognized by this place!”

Abaddon rolled his eyes. He met Crockta’s eyes. Crockta looked down.

“Well... that’s right.” Abaddon winked at Crockta with an ambiguous smile. “There is such a thing. Huhuhu...”

Crockta looked around.

The situation had cleared up for the moment, but he couldn’t feel at peace. In particular, he pushed the door when entering from the outside. That meant they would have to ‘pull’ when leaving. It was a structure similar to a bank. It was designed so that those who ran away couldn’t go out smoothly. This pyramid was a structure intended

to make things difficult for intruders. There was obviously something here.

"I haven't received guests for a long time..." Abaddon's eyes shone. "I suppose I should treat you...?"

He shook his cloak. Suddenly, a gust of wind blew at his cloak.

"Uninvited guests should taste something hot!"



"Hot dot... A spicy but unstoppable taste...!" Tiyo cried out while eating.

They were sitting together around a table in order to eat Abaddon's special dishes. When Abaddon shouted about the hot taste, empty chairs and tables were suddenly created. After that, Abaddon told them to wait and went somewhere to cook.

As he said, it was a hot taste. Spicy and hot noodles they never would've thought of eating in a hot and humid swamp! However, the taste was addictive and they couldn't stop. Tiyo suffered from the spiciness, but he ate the bowl with an expression full of anguish before asking for another bowl.

Zankus and Anor enjoyed the broth in silence. The addictive nature of the spicy food caused them to eat without stopping.

"It is okay." Crockta muttered while wiping the sweat on his forehead.

He was accustomed to the spicy taste of Korean food, but he felt pain because Crockta's body hadn't adapted to this taste yet. However, he was able to enjoy Abaddon's cooking because he was familiar with it.

I've lived alone a long time, so I've polished off my skills."

"Did you cook alone?"

"That's right. I cooked alone and ate alone. This was repeated until it eventually resulted in this spicy taste. The best spicy flavor removes even solitude. It raises pleasure from the depths of the tongue."

"Umm..." Abaddon had been living alone for a long time. "How did you end up alone

here?"

"Are you curious?"

"Yes. You don't seem like an ordinary person..."

Crockta looked at his tail. His tail emerged from behind the chair he was sitting in and shook. The scorpion tail seemed creepier the more he looked. Venom seemed to flow from the tip of the tail.

"We didn't happen to find a pyramid in the middle of the swamp. We came here because there was a strange feeling, then we met you."

"A strange feeling."

Crockta's group came here following Anor's senses. Anor felt an unknown energy with his necromancy.

"Do you deal with death?" Abaddon asked Anor. He seemed to already know what Anor had felt.

"Yes. I'm a necromancer."

"Indeed." Abaddon rose from his seat. He tugged at his cloak and fixed his clothing. Then he beckoned towards Anor. "Come over here."

"Huh?"

"Come closer" Abaddon stood next to the table and called to Anor. Anor, who wanted to figure out what was going on, scratched his head and approached Abaddon. "You have dark elf and human blood."

"That's right."

Crockta, Zankus, and Tiyo ate Abaddon's cooking while watching them. Abaddon examined Anor from top to bottom. Then he looked at the scars on Anor's ears with a sad look. Anor flinched but remained in his spot.

"The more blood that is mixed, the more possibilities you have." Abaddon said. "Your blood isn't so deep, but it contains many things. You can be anything. The fragrance

you smell is chamomile teasing your mind. You are probably one of us.”

He continued to say something but it couldn’t be understood.

“You have inherited ‘...’ blood.”

“Huh?”

Abaddon grinned.

“I guess you were right. You deserve to be my guests. One of our friends. One of the...”

Abaddon looked at Crockta. “Apostle of the fallen god.”

A white star flashed on Abaddon’s forehead as he said so.

Crockta realized something. Maybe he was destined to meet Abaddon. He was one of those who knew the secrets of Elder Lord’s world. He was the same as Paimon, who they met at the Temple of the Fallen God.

This was why he called himself an apostle of the fallen god, not a person cursed by the stars. In other words, an apostle of the gray god.



“Huh?” Anor’s eyes widened. “The necromancer is a descendant of your species?”

“That’s right. Necromancy comes from our ability to deal with death.”

They had tea after finishing their meal. Abaddon kindly explained to them what he knew. First, Anor asked, “Then my mother’s necromancy...”

“Her distant ancestor was probably a member of my species.”

“What is this species called?”

“It will probably be hard to understand. The pronunciation is much different from the language of the continent.”

Then Abaddon said something. It was a pronunciation that couldn’t be understood.

"I don't know it."

"It is good that you don't know it. My species has already been forgotten. If you want something to call us..." Abaddon smiled bitterly. "The gods have branded us as demons."

Demons. They were demons.

Crockta understood. History belonged to the winners. The losers were criticized and buried in history. The gray god had probably fallen because of some sort of event, and the species that followed here were branded demons and turned into a forgotten existence.

Gradually, the entire outline became visible.

"Do you know Demogorgon?" Crockta asked.

"Demogorgon? He's still alive? He likes to praise and boast of his strength."

"He is doing very well, and has a very good contractor, too."

"I'm glad. He is someone who gets sulky easily and has to be complimented once a day."

"Kulkkul, now he is hearing praises every minute."

Crockta smiled as he recalled Iron and his partner Demogorgon. Demogorgon belonged to the same species. It was why Iron could raise the dead. Crockta looked at his waist. The sleeping guy in here might also be their friend.

"Please look at this belt." Crockta indicated towards the belt at his waist.

Abaddon cocked his head. "I can feel a familiar aura. Can I touch it?"

"Um..."

Crockta stood up and tried to go to him, but Abaddon shook his head. At that moment, Crockta felt something touch his belly. It was Abaddon's scorpion tail. It crossed below the table and knocked on his steel belt.

Crockta flinched with surprise.

"Huhu, there is no need to be surprised. There is no poison. Now."

Abaddon's tail tapped the steel belt. It was at that moment.

Kwajik.

"Waaaaah!"

Abaddon moved backward. Crockta also stepped back. The teeth of the steel belt had chewed off Abaddon's tail. Crockta's companions moved away from Crockta.

Wagujak. Wagujak.

The steel belt continued to chew on Abaddon's tail.

"Abaddon! Are you okay *dot*?"

"Ah... I will die soon... I enjoyed it..."

The fallen Abaddon crouched down.

Tiyo shouted, "You can't die *dot*!"

"I..."

As soon as Tiyo grabbed his body, something emerged behind him. Tiyo looked back. It was the scorpion tail.

"Huhu, salty!"

Abaddon rose from where he had fallen. His tail had regenerated and returned to its original shape.

"You surprised me *dot*!"

"I wouldn't die from this."

But he looked pale, as if he had used a lot of strength.

"By the way..." Abaddon watched the belt on Crockta's waist and touched his chin. "You have something really great."

"Do you know the Demon's Mouth? It is also called the Despairing Demon's Belt."

"It is called by that name?"

As Abaddon took one step closer, the steel teeth at Crockta's waist clapped together. Abaddon immediately retreated.

"Take it easy."

Crockta slapped the forehead of the skull part of the belt with the palm of his hand. The Demon's Mouth rebelled but he just hit it even more.

"Huhuhu, it is true. I am familiar with this."

"What is it?"

"I don't think he wants you to know so I won't say anymore..."

Abaddon used an honorific to refer to him. The demon sleeping in his belt seemed to be a greater presence than Crockta thought.

"He had a higher status among us."

"At first glance, he looks like a kid."

"He looks like a child, but if he opens his mouth, he can swallow the mountains and sea. The 'voracious'..."

The steel belt clanged together, as if it was threatening him. Abaddon laughed.

"...It is up to here."

It was as if the belt was staring at Abaddon. Abaddon shrugged. They sat down again.

"Is there anything else you are curious about?"

The conversation between Crockta and Abaddon was intriguing, so Zankus, Tiyo, and

Anor focused on them.

"What is the identity of the fallen god and the curse of the stars...?" Crockta got right to the chase. "In addition, what is she doing now?"

Abaddon looked at Crockta. "What is she doing now?"

"Yes."

"Are you saying she is currently in this world?"

Crockta was confused. "You don't know? She seems to be plotting something. It is in this world."

"You've met the gray god?"

"Of course. We met in the unknown 'white world'."

"Ahh..." Abaddon dropped his head. "Still..."

He seemed to be thinking of something. Then he said, "The gray god, the one who watches all deaths and the one we follow..."

Abaddon sighed before continuing.

"...It is a long story." Then he stared straight at Crockta. "Have you seen the night sky?"

"Of course."

"How was it? Beautiful?"

It was an undeniable question. Crockta nodded. There was no need to remember. He looked at the sky strewn with stars every night. The nights in Elder Lord were different from the cities on Earth, where only the moon could be seen. Numerous stars embellished the night. The whole night sky cast a bright light. It felt like the world stopped when he stared at them. An enchanting scenery created by the gods.

Crockta smiled and replied, "Of course. The most beautiful thing I've ever seen."

However, Abaddon's face was sad. "Crockta. If you listen to my words, you might not

be able to smile like that when looking at the night sky.”

Abaddon’s face was serious. “Crockta. The star god is dead. Do you know?”

“I’ve heard it.”

“What does that mean?”

Crockta closed his mouth. An uneasy feeling filled his head. Suddenly, he recalled another night sky that he saw. It was in the gray god’s ‘world.’ A faint starry night filled with white dwarfs that were cooling down.

Abaddon spoke with a sigh. The information was shocking.

“The sky is fake. The gods are maintaining the illusion. The stars have cooled down a long time ago.”

The eyes of Crockta’s group widened. What did that mean?

“The last sun we have...”

The moment that Abaddon was talking... All of a sudden, a white light wrapped around Abaddon.

“This...”

Abaddon panicked. Crockta jumped up. The sight was familiar.

“Ahh, she has me...”

Then Abaddon’s figure disappeared.

This. It was what he saw when users logged out. The gray god intervened.

CHAPTER 195

THE ROAD TO ORCROX (1)

Abaddon didn't come back after a long time.

"....."

It was then that Crockta realized that the grey god didn't want him to know too much information. Abaddon wouldn't return while they were still here.

"The grey god won't send him back."

Zankus, Tiyo, and Anor looked at Crockta.

Zankus spoke, "Those cursed by the stars, fighting something unknown."

The group of four were rushing to Orcrox in order to defend the orcs from the divine message when they encountered the bizarre being called a demon and heard about the grey god. As if this wasn't enough, they also learned that the night sky was fake, an illusion.

Zankus glanced at Crockta, as if asking him for an explanation. Crockta didn't say anything. He didn't exactly know about the curse of the stars and the grey god had an unknown plan. The other gods probably spread such a strange divine message because of her.

Crockta didn't know the proper context, so it felt like the story was heading deeper into a labyrinth. Abaddon, who seemed able to explain it, had disappeared.

"It is similar to when Crockta sometimes returns to the abyss of the stars *dot*. Is he like you?"

"My case is different. Maybe the god called him directly."

"Ummm..." Tiyo's mind was busy, his face scrunched up in concentration as he calculated different paths and outcomes. "There is no need to worry *dot!*"

He got up after a few seconds.

"First of all, let's stop the gods' plan for Orcrox *dot*. Then the answers will gradually emerge."

The rest of the group nodded at Tiyo's words. His loud voice loosened the tense atmosphere. It was better for them to move than to sit still and worry. Everyone got up. Crockta's group hoped that Abaddon would return safely to study a higher level of cuisine. They left a note for Abaddon.

[We will come back someday, and we will be expecting spicier dishes.]

As soon as he was about to leave the large space, Crockta found something. There were faded letters on the wall. Crockta focused on it. The words were written long ago. The ink had melted but the contents could roughly be understood.

The contents were praising the star god. Crockta looked at the light illuminating this space. It was a comfortable light that the eyes could easily look at. Yes, like the stars. Crockta realized that this pyramid was a building for the star god. When he died, the temples serving him would've disappeared. This pyramid might be one of the few remaining traces.

Abaddon, he remained here in remembrance of the star god. The dead god.

"The stars have cooled down a long time ago." Crockta stopped. "I always see death. Life is a process of convergence towards death. So I want to save everyone."

The voice of the grey god flashed through his head again. The memory of that day was revived. It was the vision that she showed him before he confronted the imperial army alone. A desperate power that saw the last of all living things.

The sky of dying stars that she planted in her white world. Maybe that was the real sky of this world.

"You know the answer."

Crockta touched the Demon's Mouth that was exposed to Abaddon. The guy in it didn't speak again. Crockta remembered the first time he met him. The demon, desperate from all the deaths and emptiness, had emitted his fears towards the outside world through the belt. Quantes almost became a land of death.

The grey god and the demons. If he kept fighting, someday he would get the answer.

“Crockta, what are you doing *dot*?”

Tiyo called out to him. Crockta stroked the blurred letters with his fingertips and looked at the luminous light again. It was a moment of silence for the star god.

The rest were eagerly waiting for Crockta.

“Crockta! We can’t open the door *dot*!”

“It is like when the pyramid recognized Crockta.”

“We need Crockta this time as well.”

They were pushing the door this time. Crockta silently pulled the door. Listening to their praises, Crockta imagined that he might be very clever. Anor’s bone sparrow was waiting for them at the pyramid entrance. Anor stroked its head and returned it to death. The snakes were no longer hostile to Crockta. Under their uncomfortable gazes, Crockta’s party headed north again.

Orcrox was getting closer. Many things had happened since he left. The previously immature orc was now a warrior shaking the continent. Somehow, it felt like the orc guards he saw at Orcrox would still be there.



Akhan looked at the army following him and smiled.

They might’ve been turned away at Maillard, but the size of the expedition was gradually increasing. Every town and city they passed, ambitious youths volunteered while religious nobles led their soldiers. By the time they arrived in Orcrox, it would be a huge force to be reckoned with.

Humans, elves, dark elves, dwarves, and gnomes. While the members were mostly humans and elves, there were quite a few varied members from the other species. The orcs would be destroyed by the followers of the gods.

“The gods are watching us.”

"I don't believe in the gods too much." Adandator said. He wasn't delighted by the scale of the expedition. "I just want to see a crazy guy who might kill a god."

Adandator remembered the crazy orc warrior fighting the imperial army alone. People participated in the expedition to kill him, but it wouldn't be so easy.

"Huhu, we will soon arrive in Chesswood. There will be many more joining. Adandator should have faith."

Since the expedition's departure, everything had been smooth going except for Maillard. Aklan was confident. He would attract more people at Chesswood.

"But what about the support of the business companies for the expedition?"

They needed supplies to sustain such a large number of people. Funds were sufficient due to donations not just from the empire, but from volunteers as well. They asked the business companies for a smooth supply of goods.

The first one they contacted was 'Blacksmith', the largest business company on the continent. The Blacksmith Company decided policies through a meeting of its senior executives. The decision would take some time due to this meeting, but Aklan wasn't worried. Why would they refuse?

"They will make a decision soon. Once we receive the materials from the Blacksmith Company, the expedition will become smoother."

Aklan replied as passing volunteers bowed to him. The gods they believed in were different, but they all became one due to faith. It wasn't a mere conquest, but a struggle that would unify the continent.

"Once this fight is finished, the continent will become more peaceful."

"Really..."

"Faith will bind people together."

Adandator shrugged. He thought that if the expedition won, there would be a bigger fight over the distribution of profits. However, Aklan's mind was more of a flower garden than he thought. Aklan was a pure man, despite being a paladin of the war god.



“Look over there.”

Chesswood could be seen. It was named this because the villages scattered all the place looked like a chessboard. It wasn’t a single city but many villages joined together, so the population exceeded a few big cities.

“Raise the flags higher.”

They raised flags in the name of the gods to recruit volunteers. It meant there was a flag for each god. There was also the patterns for the nobles. Colourful flags showed as they headed towards Chesswood.

“Let’s go.”

They reached Chesswood. It was the first village. The sign said ‘Dandelion Village.’

“It is a nice name for a village.

A man dragging three cows found them. The three cows were identical.

“Wonderful cows.”

“Huhu, they are my pride. Triplets.”

“Can you call the head of the village here? You might already know, but we are the expedition trying to destroy Crockta and the orcs...”

But before Aklan could finish what he was saying, something came flying.

Cheolpeok.

It was an egg. An egg had been thrown at him.

“Oh my, what is this?” The farmer pulling the three cows looked around with surprise. A village resident was holding a basket of eggs.

“Bad people. There is no one left to kill, so you want to kill Crockta?”

“Have patience, patience.”

“Mister, why should I be patient? Didn’t you hear him?”

“No matter how angry you are, it is dangerous to do that to someone holding a blade...”

“Let him stab me! I would already be a dead body if it wasn’t for Crockta.”

Akhan wiped the egg flowing down his head. The volunteers tried to pull out their weapons, but he restrained them.

“Haha, just listen to our story. We aren’t going against the orcs for no reason.”

Akhan’s mind became complicated. It was the same atmosphere as Maillard. It was understandable that the Free Cities Alliance in the south refused to join them. They had waged war with the empire and Crockta helped them.

But in Maillard, he came to know one side of Crockta that he had no idea about. In that city, Crockta was a great orc. Now his name had appeared again in Chesswood.

The man with the triplet cows walked over to Akhan.

“I’m sorry.”

“No.” Akhan said while wiping off the eggs. “As you can see, there are a lot of people. I would like to meet the village leaders of Chesswood.”

“Well... you won’t hear anything good but...” The man nodded. “Please wait a while. I will report this to Ingram, who represents Chesswood, and he will come soon.”

“Thank you.”

The man left and Akhan waited with his troops at the entrance of the village. Then he suddenly heard a song from the village. At first glance, Chesswood was a land of musicians who produced a lot of minstrels, and they seemed to like songs. Once the expedition ended, minstrels would turn their story into an epic.

At that moment. While waiting for the leader, a bunch of children ran up to the expedition members.

Aklan smiled. "Hello. Little friends."

However, their expressions weren't bright. The children glared at the expedition before one child stepped forward.

"Are you really going to kill Crockta and the orcs?"

"That's right. We are..."

"Bad people!"

Aklan made an absurd expression.

The child shouted, "You aren't worthy of our support! Concern for you? Get out of here right now! Stranger to language and rhyme! Change your metal head!"

".....!"

It was a type of rhyming song that recently became popular on the continent. A fresh form of music that criticized others. As expected from Chesswood, the children were booing them beautifully through song.

"Misters should be careful! I will say it with my stormy rhyme! Listen carefully, Crockta is our hero! You don't know anything, just staring straight ahead with blind eyes!"

The other children cheered at the little boy's impromptu lyrics.

"Yes!"

"The best!"

"Truly our village's rhyme king!"

The child didn't stop.

"A crisis in Chesswood, the raid of evil people! We didn't have strength, like hitting rocks with eggs! Then he came, our friend Crockta! There was a fountain of blood every time he moved his greatsword! He is our savior! He always pursues justice! Don't bother Crockta, you bastards!"

The song was over and the child turned around. Then he bumped shoulders with his friends and celebrated the impromptu lyrics. The children cheered.

“Yes! Historic lyrics!”

“The best improvised song!”

“Those uncles are going crazy right now!”

Aklan was speechless. After listening to the lyrics, he learned there was a crisis in the village and Crockta had rescued them.

“Misters, Crockta is our hero. Remember that.”

The child who made the impromptu lyrics looked at them. Then a man appeared and tapped the child’s head.

“This brat, what are you doing here?”

“Leader!”

“You can’t do this.”

“If you just heard my lyrics...”

“You...?”

“U-Understood!”

It was the head of Dandelion Village. He looked at Aklan and the expedition troops.

“Hrmm...”

But his eyes weren’t good. Aklan felt that things in Chesswood wouldn’t turn out how he wanted.

CHAPTER 196

THE ROAD TO ORCROX (2)

The expedition entered Chesswood. They were able to stay in a vacant lot in the center of the village. However, their expressions weren't bright. It was because of the insults that been poured their way.

Chesswood didn't welcome them. The residents went as far as throwing eggs.

"Ack! Eggs! These bastards...!"

"Be patient, patient!"

"Don't react to the residents of Chesswood."

Akhan and the commanders calmed down the expedition troops. As the representative of Chesswood, Ingram spoke to Akhan.

"I'm sorry."

"No."

"Crockta is a hero in our village, so people who want to kill Crockta will never be welcome here." Ingram was a man with a solid body. In the past, he might've been a mercenary or a soldier. "It is because Crockta saved our village, which was once on the verge of destruction."

"It is understandable. I'm curious." Akhan nodded. "What is he like?"

"Crockta?"

"Yes."

"Huhu, it is better not to know. If you know, you might want to disobey the gods' will."

"Is he that strong?"

"He is strong, but at the same time, if you know what a wonderful warrior he is, you

won't want to be hostile towards him. Rather, you would want to be friends with him." Ingram added with a smile. "Of course, the orc warrior's song he sang is terrible."

Akhan discovered that Ingram really liked Crockta. Akhan smiled bitterly and looked around. He could feel the gazes of the villagers. Following Maillard, there were traces of Crockta here. He was the founder of the Rehabilitation Brothers in Maillard and the hero who saved Chesswood.

There was a song in Chesswood praising Crockta. It was an epic song about how the strong and honest orc fought against the people raiding the villages, calling his friends and achieving a brilliant victory.

People booed the expedition and sang the song. It was to the point where the expedition had memorized the lyrics. In particular, the 'Bul'tar bul'tar bul'tar~' refrain was so addictive that the soldiers of the expedition couldn't help humming.

"The orc is more amazing than I thought."

Adandator just shrugged and said.

"Our expedition is turning out worse than we thought."

Adandator heard some expedition members shouting at the villagers and not following commands. The volunteers were angry at the reception from the village. If Akhan hadn't swung his sword and set an example for a few people, there might've been trouble.

"Adandator. Please manage the soldiers."

Akhan was a paladin who believed in the war god, so he wouldn't spare his sword if necessary.

"If you need to, discipline them using military standards."

If they caused problems for ordinary people, not Crockta and the orcs, their honor would fall to the ground. This had to stop. They were gathered for an honorable reason, not plunderers who attacked villages.

The children they encountered at the entrance kept chasing them and calling out rhymes.

“Get out of Chesswood! We can’t sleep because of you!”

“I will stab you in the shoulder! Move your feet on the road!”

“You will never win against Crockta, you are a hammer that will be nailed in! Reflect!”

“These guys...”

Ingram chased the children away. The children screamed and ran away. He shook his head and told Aklan, “If you continue, you will see a wide open space. You can stay there for a day. If you need more space, you can occupy the path. I will let the villagers know.”

“Thank you for your consideration. And...” Aklan laughed awkwardly and said. “Can I recruit volunteers from the village?”

“Hehe, well... Are you really going to do it? I can’t stop you. Try it if you want.”

Looking at the atmosphere of the village, no one would come. Still, it was better to try than to do nothing. Aklan gathered the priests of each temple.

“People from each temple will recruit volunteers.”

“Based on this atmosphere, will there be any volunteers?”

The priests had already given up. Aklan had a bitter expression on his face.

“Let’s just give it a try.”

They traveled to the other villages of Chesswood to recruit volunteers. But in the end, there was only booing. They were priests who worshiped the gods, so the villages didn’t throw eggs or hurt them. However, they all had hostility in their eyes.

It was an unfamiliar sight for the priests. In the end, they returned to the camp without recruiting one volunteer.

“The plan is going wrong.”

“First Maillard and now Chesswood.”

Aklan frowned at Adandator's smile. He had expected a tremendous number of volunteers from Chesswood, but the result was zero. There were no volunteers whatsoever.

"It's okay. We have plenty of troops now."

The expedition army was already great in number. Too many was the problem.

"There are many cities in the future."

"Yes. Let's hope so."

"Besides, good news will come soon." Aklan said to comfort himself. "Once we get a reply from Blacksmith, the marching speed will increase. Materials will be supplied quickly."



The Blacksmith Company's headquarters meeting room, where only the heads of the Blacksmith Company could gather. There was a meeting going on there. It was different from the usual calm atmosphere.

There was one woman who raised her voice the most, "The life of the company is trust!"

"But this case is different!"

"It is different! Mister Pascal! Think closely. Crockta is our top rated member and has a great deal of money! In addition, the whole world knows it! Crockta is advertised as our customer! Crockta's red headband is also a popular item! Besides, how many orcs are among our customers? Numerous orcs use our company!"

"But if we make a deal with the expedition, our profits will be enormous. There is a lot of money!"

"The trust of our customers is better than short-term profit! That is our cardinal rule! But what if we make a deal with the expedition? What will the customers think? That we consider customers as trash who can be sold to others?"

"It isn't that bad!"

“So are my words wrong? Customers trust us. Orc customers! Crockta! They believed in us and dealt with us! The amount of money from the orcs is huge! It is a betrayal for them!”

“The orcs will be gone anyway!”

“How do you know that? Even if they do disappear, this history will be remembered! That Blacksmith betrayed its customers!”

“This is really...!”

“Does anyone else think like Mister Pascal?” The woman turned her head and asked, “What do you think?”

Black Smith, the chairman of the Blacksmith company, smiled as he watched the controversy.

“Huhuhu.”

The executive that he promoted was truly unique.

At first, she was a poor position as an employee who had a negative impression because she was cursed by the stars. However, the number of vegetables she sold in Anail was abnormal, causing her to become the selling queen of the market.

Stella. The youngest but most innovative executive of the Blacksmith Company.

“Huhuhu, Stella expressed my thoughts.”

“In the end, the most important thing is what the chairman thinks. Heheh.”

“I will express my thoughts.” Black Smith laughed out loud.

Innovation meant thinking different from others. However, she didn't forget the cardinal rule of the Blacksmith Company. The root of everything. There were numerous talents from across the continent gathered beneath him, but it was rare that they had both innovation and this understanding of the fundamentals. Black Smith thought that this root essence absolutely couldn't be lost.

But Stella had it. The root. The chairman thought about Stella's words and opened his

mouth again.

"The trust of our customers is better than short-term profit..." He looked at Stella and smiled. "Thank you for reminding me of something I had forgotten for a while. Miss Stella."

"It is nothing. Any employee of Blacksmith knows it. Chairman has proved it personally."

"Knowing it and putting it in practice is different. It looks like your colleagues who perform well have forgotten this fact. They don't see it anymore."

Some of the executives flinched at his words. They sometimes did dishonest things for the sake of Blacksmith's profits. It was how they had been able to raise their status. But the chairman already knew.

The chairman continued speaking,

"I agree with you. If we make a deal with the expedition, our profits will be enormous. The position of our Blacksmith, the top company on the continent, will be further strengthened. It will make up for the losses we recently got from the Thompson Company. But..."

The chairman looked at the executives.

"Miss Stella's words are significant."

"....."

"Didn't I tell you? If there isn't an answer, always look at the root. Our root that is always there."

Black Smith pointed behind him. There was a big framed picture. Above the picture was the motto of the Blacksmith Company, that made it what it was today. All executives fell silent as they saw it. It hung in every branch of the Blacksmith Company.

[The trust of the customers is heavier than your life.]

Even since Black Smith was a young man, he never broke this promise. Even when the staff miscalculate the numbers and the company received huge losses, he didn't

withdraw from the contract. He opened a branch in remote villages and didn't close it down, despite the labor costs causing a deficit. It was because they were all promises.

As the size of the company increase, he couldn't manage all employees so he had this included as part of the staff training.

"We might see a loss now. But the world will remember that our company never harms its customers. The orcs might disappear in this war but their names will remain in our books. If we help the expedition, how can we open our books again?"

Stella's face brightened. The executives also nodded. The chairman's decision was made.

"Remember. Our company's mission isn't to make a profit."

The words that Black Smith always said, "What is our mission?"

The executives answered at the same time, "It is to benefit the world through distribution."

"Yes, that's right." Black Smith rose from his seat. "As a child, I wanted to eat fish. There was no fish available in a mountain village. Only pale chubs in the valleys... then one day, a company started trading with our village and I could eat the fish I like."

It was his origin that everyone in the Blacksmith Company knew.

"Thanks to it, my village could enjoy not only fish, but medicines, rare goods and new food. There are plenty of young Black Smith in the world. Everyone. We aren't merchants who profit from war, but true merchants who benefit the people."

"I understand."

"I'll always remember this, Chairman."

"I will follow your words."

Black Smith's will was absolute in the Blacksmith Company. The executives who objected to Stella changed their attitudes quickly. Stella bowed her head. Black Smith smiled. It felt like he had a smart granddaughter.

“Then send the reply. Unfortunately, we can’t agree to the deal.”

The answer of the Blacksmith Company was decided. They would refuse the expedition’s deal.

“Now they will probably try to make a deal with the Thompson Company,” said an executive.

The Thompson Company was an emerging threat. It started from Anail and now its activities were spreading across the world.

“That’s right. I guess so. What will Thompson do? Hahaha.”

CHAPTER 197

LIKE A SLAVE, LIKE A KING (1)

Crockta's group left the great forest. They were in the territory of the orcs. Although the forest was still thick, it wasn't as dangerous as the great forest area. As they passed through the forest, animals like deer and rabbits stared at them.

"A nostalgic landscape." Crockta muttered.

This was the scenery he saw when he was on his way to Grant to defeat the mutant wolves, his first assignment from Lenox. If they kept heading north, they would soon reach Orcrox.

"It has been a long time since I've been to Orcrox, so it feels good." Zankus said. Crockta laughed.

"Don't be excited, we are going to war."

"That makes me more excited."

"Kulkul, me too. It is exciting!"

Both orcs expressed confidence in the following battle.

"An incredible number of enemies will probably come."

"It doesn't matter. If there are 10,000 people, hunt 10,000 people. If there are one million people, hunt one million people."

"If the gods come?"

Zankus smiled, "I will hunt a god."

An absurd remark! But they were Zankus, the hunter who penetrated the sun, and Crockta, the warrior who conquered the north and stopped the empire. It wasn't arrogant to say this. Crockta and Zankus weren't bragging, but talking about their aspirations in the future war.

"I see something *dot*." Tiyo shouted.

As he said, there was something. An adult's figure could be seen from behind the bushes. As they approached, the appearance became clearer.

"This...?"

It was an elf. But it wasn't an ordinary elf.

"What the hell is this guy *dot*?"

"It isn't an ordinary elf."

"A little... No, the elf is very strange."

The elf, dressed in splendid clothing, was sitting on the rock and thinking about something. He failed to notice Crockta's group approaching him because he was deep in thought. The figure of the elf was clearly like Rodin's 'The Thinker!'

But unlike the naked sculpture, his outside was beautiful and colorful. The silk and gold threads made him look as luxurious as the emperor. It was a strange appearance that didn't match the forest.

"You over there." Crockta said as he approached. But there was no answer.

"Hey *dot*!" Tiyo shouted. The elf didn't panic at the sudden yell. He raised a hand from his chin. It was a signal to keep quiet. However, Tiyo couldn't.

"What are you doing *dot*?"

"....."

"Hey? Can you hear me *dot*?"

The elf, who had his eyes closed, sighed and got up. His clothing flowed downwards. "There are two kinds of people in the world. A person who interferes with someone's thoughts, and a person who leaves them alone."

"Did we bother you *dot*?"

"I didn't say that. But at the very least, I can't let it go." His quiet voice had an air of dignity. They met an unusual person in the forest.

"What happened?" Then the bushes rustled and one more person appeared. An orc warrior. He stood next to the elf and faced Crockta's group.

"No, who are you?" The orc asked.

"That is what we want to ask *dot!*"

An orc stood beside an elf. The combination of the luxuriously dressed elf and the orc warrior with the weapon was curious, like a nobleman and the servant who served him.

The orc rolled his eyes and introduced himself. "I am Arakunta, who is accompanying this person. A warrior."

"The elf?"

The elf didn't open his mouth. The orc explained. "We met in the forest. I don't know his name."

"What is your relationship *dot?* The combination of elf and orc is strange."

"Your group is also strange but..." The orc shrugged. "I am on my way to Orcrox. I think that you are the same. Not long ago, there was an absurd divine message about the orcs being attacked."

Crockta nodded. "Yes. We are on our way to meet the enemies of Orcrox."

"I am doing the same. Although immature, I am still a warrior recognized by Hoyt and Tashaquil! I can't stay still."

Hoyt had become the warrior instructor after Lenox. In other words, Arakunta was a warrior younger than Crockta.

Crockta smiled warmly. "How brave! Truly an orc warrior, Arakunta!"

"Kulkulkul. It is nothing, Senior!" Arakunta already noticed that Crockta was a more experienced warrior than him. "Anyway, I was going to Orcrox because of that, and was

surrounded by ogres when passing through the great forest. It would be different if there was one, but there were too many for me."

Ogres were classified as some of the most dangerous among the creatures. There weren't many monsters stronger than ogres, but they weren't the top predators because of their small numbers. Being able to face one ogre alone already made him a great warrior.

Of course, Crockta's group were an exception because they had already gone beyond the normal level.

"Then this elf saved me."

"This elf *dot*?"

"Yes. He is a quiet person with many thoughts, but he has great strength. He defeated the ogres in an instant. He followed me once I said I was heading to Orcrox. I just took a few minutes to hunt."

Crockta's group looked at the elf. There was something about him apart from his unique appearance. Crockta felt something unknown from him. There was a sense of familiarity about him. It felt like he had seen the gaze that penetrated inside him before. However, this was definitely the first time he saw the elf.

Crockta stared at him and asked, "Anyway, it is nice to meet you. What is your name? I am Crockta. As you can see, I am an orc warrior."

The reaction came from the side.

"Crockta...!"

Arakunta's eyes widened. Crockta was the envy of all newbie warriors. The last person trained by legendary instructor Lenox, the apprentice warrior who grew up and quickly became the strongest orc. His name was all over the continent. In particular, the story that he attacked the imperial army alone and eventually destroyed it with his friends was heard in every ear.

"Are you really the 'Northern Conqueror' and 'Empire's Deficit' Crockta?" Arakunta asked.

"It is the first time I've heard of 'Empire's Deficit' but I am definitely the 'Northern Conqueror'"

"Ohh, Crockta! It is an honor to meet you!" Arakunta approached him for a huge and to shake hands. Crockta laughed and accepted him. "Then the people here..."

Arakunta looked at Tiyo and Anor in turn.

"The famous two people who are always with Crockta...! No wonder why the combination was strange!"

Tiyo and Anor pricked their ears. Arakunta pointed at Anor with shaking shoulders and shouted.

"Then this dark elf! You are the lord of the dead, 'Death's Ruler' Anor!"

".....!"

Anor looked awkward. He hadn't used his necromancy often after coming down to the continent. Nevertheless, his reputation increased as he traveled with Crockta and such a great title ended up attached to him.

"If so, this small gnome!"

"Hehet, yes, I am that gnome *dot!*"

Tiyo shrugged.

"Magic Bullets Berserker!"

"W-What *dot?*"

"When a battle is going on, there is a rampage of magic bullets, 'Magic Bullets Berserker' Tiyo!"

Tiyo's mouth twisted. He didn't seem to like the expression 'berserker.'

Tiyo cleared his throat and said. "Hum hum. Well, rather than that expression... merciless shooter... storm bombardment..."

But Arakunta had already turned away. "These two I know, but Orc, what is your name? You look like a hunter."

He examined Zankus. His tone was polite because he realized Zankus wasn't an ordinary hunter after seeing the huge bow. "Is your name perhaps..."

Zankus shrugged at Arakunta, "Zankus."

"Z-Z-Z-Zankus!"

Arakunta was thrilled as he looked at Crockta's group.

"Crockta and his friends, as well as the legendary hunter who shot down the sun, 'Sun Killer' Zankus! That is a really huge arrow! I will have no regrets, even if I die today!"

He shook like Zankus' arrow was pointed at him.

"Calm down. I'm not that great of an orc."

"What are you talking about? Zankus and Crockta are legendary orcs. I met legends today!"

Arakunta's fussing continued.

"Hrmm..."

Crockta ignored Arakunta and looked at the elf. He hadn't heard the name of the elf yet.

"Anyway, so what is your name?"

"Name... I can't tell you my name." The elf replied.

Crockta raised his eyebrows.

"What an expensive person."

"We aren't going to stay together long, so there is no need to know my name."

"I see. Are you going to Orcrox?"

“No.”

“Then where?”

“I’m not going anywhere.”

His words were like a zen riddle.

“Then?”

“Until when is the right question. I will walk until I find the answer.”

“Umm...”

“If you are heading to Orcrox, we should go together.”

The elf wanted to join Crockta’s group.

This elf had a strange head His clothing wasn’t that of a warrior, but he was a magician strong enough to defeat ogres. There were plenty of magicians who became strange due to their long research. The elf probably belonged in that category.

“Crockta! Let’s go to Orcrox together!” Arakunta’s eyes shone as he exclaimed.

Crockta looked back at his party. Everybody shrugged.

“Well... there is no reason to reject *dot*.”

“It doesn’t matter.”

“Huhu, I will show you my skills *dot*!”

Thus, Crockta was accompanied by the novice warrior Arakunta and the unidentified elf.



Akhan’s expedition was cruising. A few unexpected places declined but it was heading in a positive direction.

The number of volunteers increased as the faithful and temples continued to participate. Nobles and knights who wanted to build merits also joined the expedition. There were too many people, so he had to divide the command.

"The Blacksmith Company declined the deal," Aklan said as he marched beside Adandator.

They were near Arnin, the city of elves.

"Why?"

"It is the result of the meeting they called."

"It is about trust. The orcs."

Aklan scratched his head. "Well, it isn't a big deal. We can find another company before the battle. There is time. Ask the Thompson Company; its headquarters in Anail are right in front of Orcrox."

"You should find out more." Adandator said while swinging his blade through the air. "There are many unexpected things. Who knows what will happen in the future. Don't you know? Perhaps Crockta has a relationship with Thompson."

"....."

Aklan imagined it. It seemed possible.

As he organized the expedition and moved across the continent, he had to face Crockta's trail. In fact, Aklan didn't know much about Crockta. Before appearing in the south, the gods had whispered 'Northern Conqueror' and he was 'Empire's Deficit' after fighting the empire. That was all he knew.

However, Crockta had many achievements outside the south. The people praised him. It was an act difficult to imagine with a person colluding with the gray god.

"If that is the case..."

"Don't worry about it."

Someone said from behind him.

It was one of the nobles who joined the expedition. He ruled a small territory in the east. Rather than volunteering because of faith, he wanted to increase his reputation and earn some of the profit from this expedition.

"Peros."

"Anail has a very dangerous man."

"Dangerous man?"

"He rules the underworld there. A man who runs Anail and exerts influence throughout the continent. The king of the back alleys." He smiled. "Even Thompson can't fight him in Anail. And I am familiar with the king of Anail. I did something for him before, and his work is thorough. I'll ask him to stop Thompson from refusing the deal."

"He is a criminal."

"Of course, the worst villain and cold-blooded. But in this case, a villain is the strongest ally. Thompson can't resist him."

Akhan fell silent. While it would be better if the deal with the Thompson Company were successful, he was unwilling to hold hands with a criminal.

Adandator asked instead of Akhan. "What is his name?"

"Derek."

"I've heard it somewhere before. Then, please ask."

"Please leave it to me. I will send a messenger down. It will be a quick horse."

A cooperation with Derek was established. Akhan declared, "But we are are an expedition that follows the gods' will. Holding hands with such a person..."

"You are a very stiff person."

Peros frowned. Adandator also winked at him.

"Everybody..."

Aklan sighed, "Do you think so as well?"

Aklan looked back at the army following him. Numerous gazes were gathered on him, They were the heads of the expedition moving with them. The nobles and commanders, as well as Aklan and Adandator. They nodded as he listened to the conversation.

"If there is light, shadows have to exist. Please leave it to us this time."

"We need to be as prepared as possible. The orcs are tough opponents."

"There is a secular way of life. We need to use everything possible.:

Even the priests of the other temples closed their eyes. It was unspoken consent. He couldn't go against the majority opinion. Aklan once again felt nervous about the expedition. There was an anxiety that kept stabbing at his stomach.

Yes, it was present since Maillard.

'All of them admire Crockta.'

It was the same at Chesswood.

'Listen carefully, Crockta is our hero!'

He once again deeply sighed.

"...I understand."

Peros gave an order to his deputy, who headed to the rear. Within a short time, a messenger rose away from the army. Aklan felt heavier with every step. He wanted to stop this. But, he didn't stop. Numerous volunteers were following behind Aklan. Now he couldn't stop.

He moved forward like he was pushed. Adandator, Peros, the other nobles who were shoulder-to-shoulder with him. Aklan stepped forward like he was caught in their wave. The momentum of the crowd didn't stop. He couldn't tell whether he was leading them or being pushed by them.

CHAPTER 198

LIKE A SLAVE, LIKE A KING (2)

“What are you thinking about?” asked Crockta.

The furrowed lines on the elf’s face didn’t disappear as he continued simultaneously thinking, walking, and eating. Yet he kept looking at Crockta, Zankus, and Arakunta, as if he were observing them.

Crockta felt a monkey being studied by a zoologist.

“I don’t know what it is, but I might be able to help.”

The elf stared at Crockta with an intense gaze. However, his answer was a refusal. “No, it is a problem that I have to answer.”

“Then please stop. Do you have to look at us to find the answer?”

The elf nodded in agreement, “That’s right.”

“Then what’s the problem? I feel worried when you look at us.”

“I can’t tell you.”

“Ohh, how frustrating!”

Arakunta laughed as he watched both of them. “He’s a person with many secrets. Still, he isn’t a bad person so calm down.”

Crockta nodded as he chewed on meat. “I understand. By the way...”

They were eating the venison that Zankus hunted and Tiyo cooked. Their speed was a little slower after Arakunta and the elf joined, but they were steadily heading towards Orcrox. They would arrive soon.

“Setting aside the elf friend for now, what’s that noise?”

“Isn’t it someone passing by *dot*?

"They seem to be hiding."

Zankus chewed on the venison and said, "Sounds like bandits."

They were talking about a rustling bush. While Crockta's group was eating, the bushes moved and a group of humans approached. They seemed to be sneaking around, but it was impossible to fool Crockta's group. They all knew about the approach of the humans and kept quiet.

"Y-You noticed quickly!"

"But that doesn't change anything, Orcs!"

The humans popped out from the bushes, all wearing the same equipment: leather armor, a sword, and a shield. Their posture was poor, but their willpower was good.

"In the name of the gods!"

"Punish the orcs!"

They rushed forward. Crockta's group exchanged glances, as if passing on the burden, before eventually settling on Crockta. Crockta couldn't hold up against their heavy gazes and stood up with God Slayer in hand.

"Annoying."

Crockta stepped forward and wielded the sword. The wind blew. The enemies were pushed away by the wind pressure and fell.

"Hup!"

"What?"

Their momentum was quickly dampened by his overwhelming dance. They couldn't come any closer and stared at Crockta. The fallen people raised their bodies. Their weapons trembled.

"What strength...!"

They grabbed their necklaces and prayed to their god. The group wasn't made up of

bandits, but fanatics targeting the orcs. Apart from the expedition, there were also small groups raiding orcs. However, they found the wrong opponents.

“Follow the divine message! For the god of war!”

“We shall shed blood for the goddess of mercy!”

“For the divine message!”

They rushed towards Crockta’s group again. However, Crockta broke all their weapons using God Slayer. As soon as the greatsword hit it, the shields flew away from the shock. They weren’t his opponents.

“Do you still want to continue?”

Crockta headed towards the fallen humans. The humans wriggled as the shadow approached. Crockta smiled and placed his foot on the chest of one person, who let out a moan.

“Yes, the gods want to kill us?”

“Kuock... that’s right. The goddess of mercy, no one else, said that! How wicked must you be for the goddess of mercy and compassion to want to kill you! For the goddess!”

They wielded their weapons again but were forced to drop them due to Crockta.

“Keeeok...”

“The gods...”

Crockta shrugged and asked, “Have you ever wondered about the gods you are following?”

“What nonsense is this...?”

“I will let you know. They aren’t perfect. They lie as we do and deceive others for their own benefit.”

Crockta knew about the divine message. So he knew that the gods weren’t absolutely omnipotent. The gods believed that Crockta and the orcs were colluding with the grey

god. This was false. Crockta had met the grey god. But they were closer to enemies than allies.

The situation was ridiculous in Crockta's eyes, so he thought that the people who believed in the divine message were pitiful.

"We aren't conspiring with the grey god."

"What nonsense are you saying?"

"We have no intention of causing a war."

"Shut up! We will get rid of you!"

"I see."

The humans had no intention of listening to Crockta's words. Was it because Crockta was pointing a sword at them? Or was their beliefs really that high? Crockta lifted God Slayer to confirm it. He moved the blade.

"W-Wait a minute..."

The greatsword slowly fell down. The struggling man caught the blade with his hand. He couldn't wrap his hand around God Slayer's huge blade.

"Kuooooh..."

He also couldn't beat Crockta's strength. He closed his eyes as the blade of the sword pointed at his neck.

"W-Wait a minute...!"

"I'm going to kill you." Crockta grinned.

The man shouted as it was about to touch him, "S-Spare me!"

The blade stopped.

"Spare you?"

"Y-Yes. Stop for a second..."

"Didn't you say you wanted to kill me and the orcs?"

"I lost. I admit it." The man shouted with closed eyes. Moisture emerged from the tightly closed eyes. "I surrender! Spare me!"

His hands shook while holding onto the blade and he shouted.

"Do the rest of you have the same thoughts?"

Crockta looked around at the believers. Their breathing was rough as they watched Crockta and the man. Then they nodded. Crockta pulled God Slayer away.

"Understood."

The man got up quickly and stood with his party. They all looked at Crockta.

Crockta declared, "Throw away your weapons."

They exchanged looks before slowly dropping their weapons. The spears, swords, shields, etc were all dropped.

"And..." Crockta placed God Slayer on his shoulder. "Get out of here. The scared humans started to run away.

Crockta admired their quick movements before returning to the party. His face was calm because it was a natural victory.

"Daring to go against Crockta... humans are so stupid!"

Arakunta was delighted after seeing their movements. Crockta laughed as he sat back down and picked up the venison. It hadn't cooled down yet.

"Hey." At that time, the elf opened his mouth. "Why did you just let them go?"

Crockta chewed on the venison and replied.

"Why?"

"They will come back again after running away. They will join the expedition or attack the other orcs."

Crockta nodded. "I guess so."

"Then why did you leave them alive?"

"That..." Crockta laughed. He swallowed the venison and said. "It is a good day."

"What are you talking about?"

"The sunshine is good and the wind is cool, so I let them go. They are just following the gods' divine message, and haven't sinned."

"....."

"In addition, a warrior doesn't attack unarmed people!"

The lines on the elf's face thickened further. "Are you serious?"

"I'm serious." Crockta got up after the meal. "There is one thing I want to say."

"What is it?"

"I don't know what you are so worried about. Anyway, all of us will die someday. Life is short so we should just focus on the present." Crockta grinned. "You are alive right now."

The elf's eyes widened at Crockta's words. At the same time, the wrinkles on his brow disappeared. His face was like a pure and bright elf youth. He looked at Crockta quietly before the lines reappeared. But there was a slight smile on his face.

"I see. Yes, that is your greeting." He muttered.

Crockta's group started moving again. Now Crockta knew the terrain. Orcrox was around the corner.



Anail's king of the underworld. No one could go against him. It didn't mean he terrorized the citizens. However, he penetrated into people's psychology and deliberately seduced them into a contract. If they cheated and broke the contract, a pain worse than death waited.

That was his way. As such, he also kept his promises.

"Thompson." Then he slowly called the opponent's name. The opponent's face was distorted with pain. "Your answer?"

"....."

"It will just get worse..." Anail's king teased. A pained moan emerged from Thompson's mouth.

"Ugh...!"

The man grinned, "It would be easier if you listened to me."

Thompson gritted his teeth and replied, "Don't make me... laugh."

"You don't seem to know your situation."

The man's laughter rang out in the sealed room. Thompson's body shook as he closed his eyes. He didn't expect this man to be like this. He had been silent, only to suddenly push the blade towards Thompson. Thompson tried to resist as much as possible, but it couldn't be helped.

He visualized many scenes in his head as the man's hand moved again.

Then he cried out, "Stop."

"Now give up."

"Stop. I understand."

The man laughed, "People are fun. You know the result yet still want to challenge it. Continue and continue. In the vain belief that one day you will win."

“.....”

“It is human weakness. Thompson.”

Thompson couldn't resist anymore and shouted, “Ah, don't imitate that bastard's tone!”

The man was surprised at the sudden shout, “W-Why are you shouting all of a sudden, Brother?”

“That's it. You cheated! That's right!” Thompson pointed at the chessboard located between them. “You were a novice before the bet, yet your skills suddenly improved? Isn't this cheating in chess?”

“Oh, I didn't study. Brother, there is no need to be angry. I don't study but my mind is good. I got better after a few matches. Brother's mind is too stiff!”

“Eek...!” Thompson took deep breaths from where he was sitting. “Pant, pant. Ah, shit.”

The man laughed at Thompson's voice and said, “The game is over. Then, I will enforce the contract...”

“Don't follow Derek!”

“What's wrong with that?” The man whistled. “He has already died.”

Jeremy grinned. “Isn't that right, Kids?”

The big men in black outfits, watching the chess match, bowed their heads and shouted.

“That's right! Brother!”

“That's correct!”

“Dead!”

“Brother killed him!”

Jeremy shrugged. “Right.”

Thompson shook his head at the scene. “Derek didn’t do this but...”

“This fits my taste. By the way...” Jeremy coughed. “Doesn’t the expedition want you to sell supplies to them?”

“Ah, there was something like that.”

“Are you going to sell it?”

“What?”

“Sell goods...”

“You bastard, are you disregarding me? Eh!” Thompson jumped up and overturned the chessboard. “I am Thompson. I’m not a man who will break faith. Crockta and Hoyt are my friends! I absolutely won’t sell to them!”

“Ah, no! Uh!” Jeremy’s face distorted. “Why is the chessboard overturned!”

“Eh? My mistake. Why did you say something like that? It is your fault.”

“This is completely cheating!”

“Aren’t you trying to swindle a merchant living on one credit?”

The two big shots of Anail. Thompson of the Thompson Company and Jeremy, king of Anail’s underworld, hollered at each other.

CHAPTER 199

LIKE A SLAVE, LIKE A KING (3)

The spires of Orcrox appeared in the distance.

The unidentified elf spoke, "Crockta."

It was rare for him to speak first. Crockta stared at him.

"I have one question."

"Ask me."

The elf stopped. Crockta's party stopped walking. At that moment, the party felt that this elf would leave soon. It was an unknown feeling. This would probably be the elf's final question.

"What does this look like?"

The elf raised his hand and a strange thing happened. The dense tree above them started to bow down. The branches of the trees slowly lowered towards them in a courteous gesture, like the trees were living creatures. The mouths of Crockta's group dropped open.

"Crockta. What do you think of this?"

A sparrow on the branch moved onto the elf's finger. The trees and sparrow both moved for him.

"That..." Crockta looked at it. It was just a plain sparrow. "A sparrow."

"That's right. A sparrow." The elf raised his hand. The sparrow flew off. However, it didn't fly away and landed on the elf's shoulders. "It looks and sounds like a sparrow. Maybe it has a yellow beak. The important thing is that at least it isn't a crow."

"That's right. It certainly isn't a crow."

"Then..." The elf stared straight at Crockta. "If everyone calls this bird a crow, what will you do?"

Crockta looked confused because he didn't understand the question, "What does that mean...?"

"This bird is clearly not a crow. It doesn't look like one. But everyone calls this bird a crow. Everyone in the world is saying so except for you."

The sparrow once again landed on the elf's finger. The sparrow turned his head and gazed at Crockta. This elf didn't have a malicious mentality. Crockta could feel it. Otherwise, this little bird wouldn't be able to be in the elf's hands with a calm face.

The elf continued speaking, "The whole world except for you is calling it a crow. If you say this is a sparrow instead of a crow, everyone will turn away from you. Maybe they will tease you for being blind, or call you a liar. No matter how you shout, no one will listen. You will be labeled a maniac."

"Ahh..."

"Crockta. Will you still call this bird a sparrow? Or will you turn away and say it is a crow?"

Crockta smiled. It was an easy question.

"Well, if everyone is calling a sparrow a crow... It is a big deal."

"I see..."

"But that is it." Crockta touched the handle of his greatsword. "Unless a sparrow tells me that it is a crow, I will call a sparrow a sparrow."

"....."

"If people were to paint the feathers black and call a sparrow a crow, I will do my utmost to stop them and say that it is a sparrow."

Crockta looked at Tiyo, Anor and Zankus. They shrugged. Crockta smiled at the elf.

"A sparrow is a sparrow."

The elf shook his head, "Then you will be alone. Nobody will want to be with you. Rather, you will become a strange being."

It was a soft voice. Crockta burst out laughing. His laugh rang through the silent forest.

"You are a slave dressed like a king."

".....!"

The elf's eyes widened. No one had ever called him a slave. It was the opposite. He had a power that no one could understand, dressed in gorgeous clothing and was elegant. Now this orc had called him a slave.

"You put on very nice clothes. But rather than your own beliefs, you think about the surroundings and other people. It is the mindset of a slave. If it is so scary, you can call the sparrow a crow-like everybody else. If they say something green is red, they are red. The night will become the day and the earth will be called the sea. If you give yourself up, everything will flow smoothly."

"I..."

"However, if you want to be the master of your own mind, pay attention to this."

Crockta reached out his hand. The sparrow stared at Crockta and jumped towards his fingers. Crockta gently cradled the sparrow.

"Even if the world is pointing at me in ridicule, I will say that this bird is just a sparrow."

The elf looked at Crockta, whose eyes were filled with conviction and an unshakable integrity.

"I see." The lines on the elf's face disappeared as his distressed face gradually softened. He flashed a faint, yet beautiful smile. He declared, "I dressed like a king but thought like a slave."

"Yes."

"Now that I know, I should dress like a king and act like a king."

"Yes."

“Thank you for letting me know.”

The elf stared at Crockta. Then he looked at Zankus, Tiyo, and Anor. He spread open his arms. Then the forest changed.

“.....!”

A straight path to Orcrox opened up. The trees shook their bodies and twisted their roots, giving way to Crockta. It was an incredible sight.

“You...” Anor suddenly spoke. There was a look of realization on his face. The elf reached for Anor. Then a branch came down over their heads. As the elf moved his hand, the branch touched Anor’s cheek, as if it was an extension of the elf’s hand.

“You’ve had a hard time coming here. Child.” The elf looked at each party member one by one. “I saw you and tried to get an answer. An answer that I couldn’t find. However, it wasn’t that I didn’t know the answer. In fact, I was ignoring the answer all along.”

He looked at Crockta. “Like a slave.”

Crockta grinned. “Now you seem like a king.”

“Thank you.” The elf stepped back. It was time to leave. “I came here as a slave dressed like a king, and will be leaving a king.”

His body blurred. The vegetation of the forest leaned towards him. The wind bowed to him. The trees leaned down and worshipped him.

“I hope to see you again. The boy in the north wanted to say thank you. Crockta.”

Then the elf whispered. There was no sound. His whisper wasn’t towards them. Anor’s eyes widened. Crockta, Zankus, and Tiyo didn’t hear it. All elves in the world heard the whisper.



“The elves’ world tree has withdrawn from the war.”

“What?”

“I don’t know why. The elves have started to leave.”

“What is going on?”

“Those who came of their own will are still left, but the elves who came because of the divine message are returning home. More than half the elves are gone.”

“.....”

Adandator frowned before starting to laugh. “How interesting.”

Akhan sighed. The elves heard the whisper of the world tree.

“The orcs aren’t colluding with the grey god, and they aren’t evil. Crockta is a hero.”

However, the other gods were different. Another divine message came down, encouraging the followers to believe them. They even blamed the world tree for poor judgment. This wasn’t the behaviour of the gods he knew. It was remarkably like a human’s behaviour.

“Arnin won’t turn out well.”

“I guess so.”

They reached the city of elves, Arnin. After receiving this news, Arnin was unlikely to give support.

“Try it once.”

But the result was as they expected. No, it was worse than that.

Akhan sat in Mayor Ennis’ office and felt a strange mood again.

“Do you see this vest?”

“Yes.”

“An orc used to wear it, also known as the first captain of the Plains Rescue Team, which is a landmark and the pride of Arnin. He created the rescue team.”

There was no need to ask who he was.

“Crockta.”

“That’s right. He because an honorary citizen of Arnin and revealed the killers and mayor who used a false mask to mock the citizens.”

Crockta’s story was told in the textbooks at Arnin’s schools. He was an honorary citizen who represents Arnin.

“Above all, the world tree is stopping the elves from participating.”

“.....”

“It will be useless to propose the agenda to Congress.”

“I understand. Thank you.”

Eggs might be thrown at them, like Chesswood.

“I don’t know how the situation with the gods turned out like this, but I will tell you as a person who met Crockta, not the mayor. Crockta isn’t such an orc.”

“.....”

“I didn’t even know who he was then. He was just a plains officer. However, he helped the humans and elves with the triters on the plains. Despite being an orc, he is a light in the darkness.”

“Light...”

“He illuminates the surroundings. I wouldn’t be the mayor if it wasn’t for him. The travelers would still be losing their lives. They would die from the triters and that wicked girl.”

Akhan nodded. “I understand.”

“You can stay for a day to recruit volunteers. But please think about what I said.”

“Yes.”

He left without any results. Arnin was a beautiful city. Aklan was heading to the expedition's camp when he suddenly stopped at Arnin's square. A monument stood there. It was a monument to honor the day when Elsanad, Elwina and Ilya, the demons of Arnin, were expelled. It wrote about the honorary citizen Crockta, who came as a traveler but left as Arnin's hero.

"I am an honorary citizen!"

"I am the best citizen!"

"You just threw trash on the floor! I will accuse you!"

Children played around, pretending to be honorary citizens. Aklan stared up at the sky and muttered, "I don't know."

He shook his head and returned to the expedition's camp. The expedition was camping outside Arnin.

"There was no result. I'm sorry."

"It was expected."

"Thanks for the hard work."

He came back with nothing, but Adandator and the expedition leaders nodded because it was already expected. Now they didn't have any great expectations towards the elves. Some elves volunteered but there weren't many due to the world tree.

"How about stopping by Quantes?"

"Gnomes don't believe in the gods..."

"Let's just give it a try. Anyway, the elves are gone so we need to fill up the numbers. Quantes is on the way to Orcrox."

"Okay."

Aklan was silent during the meeting of leaders.



The next day, they headed towards Quantes. Shortly before leaving Arnin, they could see the famous Arnin Plains Rescue Team and the triters.

In the midst of it was a rock.

“This?”

Aklan stopped. Letters were carved onto the rock.

[A warrior doesn't attack unarmed people.]

It was a rock written by Crockta. Aklan never met him before, but he couldn't help feeling familiar with Crockta. He knew that Crockta was a great warrior.

“What are you doing? Let's go quickly.”

People shouted from behind Aklan.

“Ah, I'm sorry.”

Aklan held the reins. The march continued. Aklan turned and squinted at the rock, but he could no longer see it due to the army. Aklan looked at Adandator beside him. He saw the leaders, nobles and numerous expedition forces. Their faces were stiff. It might be because Orcrox was getting closer.

Aklan closed his eyes. He couldn't stop here. They had already come so far. It didn't matter what type of person Crockta was anymore. All the gods called him a villain. It was enough. The people had gathered here for the extermination of Crockta and the orcs. They were overflowing with willpower.

The decision wasn't made by him, but the enormous crowd. He erased Maillard, Chesswood and Arnin from his head. The vacancy was filled with the divine message, expedition army and the hatred of the random crowd.

Aklan opened his eyes. It was a short moment of worry. He returned to being Aklan, a pious warrior of the war god.

‘War God... Please bless our way.’

The horses, who started running the race, couldn't stop.

CHAPTER 200

DRAGON AND TIGER CAVE

As they approached the entrance to Orcrox, they saw two orcs in chain armor standing like stone statues. Their blades flashed in the sun. The guards found Crockta and laughed. They were laughing but due to the tusks and heinous appearance, their faces seemed evil.

“Hey. Are you alive?”

They hadn’t changed. Crockta stood in front of them. He was no longer an apprentice warrior. He returned to Orcrox as a great warrior.

“At that time, it didn’t seem likely...”

“The warrior who shook the continent has returned to Orcrox.”

The guards laughed and Crockta laughed with them.

“You are alive.”

“Of course. I’m not weaker than you.”

Crockta bumped fists with the two guards. It wasn’t enough for Crockta so he hugged them. The orc guards burst out laughing.

“Crockta has been doing great things!”

“It was great to hear.”

“How embarrassing.”

Crockta remembered when he first came here. At that time, he really hadn’t known anything. He thought they were just well-formed NPCs. But that wasn’t it. The orcs and the orcs of Orcrox lived in the world of Elder Lord, as well as all the warriors who died that day.

Grom, Kim Hyunchul who was now in jail, Lenox, Gulda and all the orcs he met crossed his mind.

“Anyway, I am glad to see you again.”

The guards laughed with their arms around Crockta’s shoulder. Then they looked at Zankus.

“If it isn’t Zankus.”

“It has been a while.”

There were no orcs who didn’t know Zankus, the hunter who penetrated the sun. The guards bumped fists with Zankus.

“You are unchanged.” Zankus explained to Crockta’s group. “These guards have been protecting this place longer than Lenox. They were standing here when I first arrived.”

“Really?”

They were very old veterans.

Crockta introduced Tiyo and Anor. “They are my colleagues.”

“I’ve heard the story. Very brave friends.”

Tiyo nodded.

“Huhu, my reputation has spread *dot!*”

Tiyo was several times smaller than an orc, but he was the epitome of a man. Tiyo imitated the orcs with the fist bumps, before entering Orcrox. There was a stir in Orcrox as soon as Crockta’s group appeared.

Orcs passing by discovered them and opened their mouths, “Crockta and Zankus are together!”

“It is an honor to meet you. I am alive!”

“Welcome back!”

Crockta first came to Orcrox as a stupid newcomer. Now he became a great warrior who people respected.

“It feels like home.”

Crockta headed towards the training ground where Hoyt was. As he came closer, he could hear the orcs. He remembered the old days when he ran around the training ground under Lenox’s command.

“First hit! First one! Focus every time you swing! Wield it like it is your life!”

“Uwaaaaah!”

“Is that lousy swing the best you can do? Is it? Burochwi!”

“Nooooooooo!”

“Then swing again! Don’t be afraid to die!”

“Bul’tarrrrrrrrrrrr——!”

It was a familiar voice. Hoyt, who was standing in the middle of the training grounds, shouted like Lenox. Crockta breathed in deeply and shouted.

“Are you alive, Hoyt?!”

Everyone stopped for a moment as Crockta’s group appeared at the camp. Orcs were sparring, swinging their weapons in the air and building strength through push-ups.

Hoyt, Orcrox’s instructor, just laughed. “You came back.”

“Yes.”

It was Hoyt. It was the first time since the battle where Lenox died.

“You are alive. Bul’tar!”

“Bul’tar!”

Crockta and Hoyt bumped fists and embraced each other. It was a meeting of two great

warriors.

"Is that Crockta?"

"Just like the rumors, he has a fierce face and a menacing greatsword."

Even orcs felt fear at his appearance! In addition, his representative greatsword was much bigger than the rumors. The orcs nodded at the sight of Crockta.

"Indeed, the warrior who fought the north and the empire."

After Crockta finished his greeting with Hoyt, Zankus also extended his fist. They were familiar with each other.

"Stop running around and stop by Orcrox often." Hoyt scolded.

"Kulkul, a hunter doesn't settle down."

Then it was Tiyo and Anor's turn. Hoyt welcomed Crockta's companions.

'Magic Bullets Berserker' Tiyo and 'Death's Ruler' Anor were already famous as Crockta's companion.

"We haven't met in a long time, so let's have a drink..."

"Good. Let's go quickly!"

"But I don't want these guys to relax."

Hoyt looked around. This was the orc's training ground. A place where men were created. He was no less harsh than Lenox. Hoyt scanned the area like he was uncomfortable.

Crockta went forward, "Leave it to me."

"You?"

"I was once one of them, so I know their minds very well."

All orcs focused on him as Crockta placed the greatsword on his shoulder. He was

'Northern Conqueror' and 'Empire's Deficit' Crockta. He was already a legend. Countless orcs who wanted to be like him flocked to this area. In addition, it wasn't just the orcs here.

"That Crockta..."

"Awesome..."

There were many users who became orcs because of Crockta. Ever since the legendary broadcast of Crockta's fight against the empire, the influx of orc users greatly increased. Those who selected the warrior class were present on the training ground. Crockta's fans willingly came to the training ground where no one wanted to train before.

Crockta threw away their expectations.

"Your eyes are cloudy!"

Crockta yelled loudly. The sudden rant made everyone's eyes go blank.

"The eyes of the weak!"

Crockta grinned as he looked over at Hoyt. There was a time when he wielded the sword like these people. Crockta looked at every one of them.

"Can you be a warrior with such weak eyes? It is better to pull such rotten eyes out!"

The orcs in training looked at Crockta with a face filled with complaints. Their pride as an orc was hit.

"Is there a problem? Then let's make a bet! If you win the bet, there will be no more training for today! You can go to the pub for a beer and Instructor Hoyt will forgive you!" Crockta shouted.

The orcs were shaken. It was an opportunity to take a day off from harsh training and drink a cold beer.

"But! If you lose, you will have to sleep here. Train until the sun rises tomorrow!"

"L-Late night training?"

“That’s right.”

“Ugh...!”

A harsh bet!

“Then what is the bet?”

Crockta grinned. He placed the greatsword on the ground. Crockta raised a hand towards the orcs and gestured.

“Come at me all at once. Do whatever it takes. You will win if I fall to the ground once.”

“That...!”

In the end, it was a fight. The orcs looked at each other. They could win based on numbers, but the opponent was Crockta. There was no chance of winning, even with so many people.

“You can’t do it? All of you are cowards!”

“ ”

"I am standing alone without a weapon! Look at you now!" Crockta moved forward and pointed to the nearest orc. "Carrying a blade! Carrying an axe! You are acting like this despite holding a hammer! You aren't orcs. Humans! Elves! Not even dwarves!"

“Don’t insult us!”

"Insult? Do you feel insulted?" Crockta grinned. "Then come."

" " | "

The nearest orc snorted. His axe shook before he aimed at Crockta. As expected from someone who trained under Hoyt, it was a great blow despite him being an apprentice.

“Bul’tarrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr!”

However, the opponent was Crockta. The axe didn't reach him. Instead, Crockta's fist hit his abdomen.

“Keheok!”

This was just the beginning. All the orcs on the training ground ran towards Crockta. A huge cloud of dust rose up as a massive number of orcs ran towards one person, concealing their appearance.

“It is hot.” Hoyt muttered as he watched the scene.

“Hehet, I remember when I fought 17 people in Quantes *dot!*”

“This is more like 40-50 than 17...”

There were punching and moaning sounds from all over the place. Orcs flew through the air. Then after some time had passed, Crockta stood alone. He raised his fist and declared, “You are lacking. Very lacking. Insufficient!”

But there were no longer any orcs who could challenge him. They moaned while clutching their wounds in pain.

“Is it hard? Painful? Nobody cares! Train! Get up and swing your weapon!” Crockta kicked the orcs to hurry them up off the ground. The orcs rose to their feet after Crockta’s kicks. “Stand up!”

“Keok, so painful...!”

“Training is practical! Will you stop fighting due to pain when going against enemies on the battlefield! Rise! Everything is hard! Nobody cares!”

“Ugh!”

“I will go to drink a cold beer with Instructor Hoyt. You keep training! Kuhahahahat!”

The orcs trembled at Crockta’s vicious appearance.

“This is the real Northern Conqueror!”

“I’m glad that Hoyt is the instructor...”

Zankus shook his head and said, “If that guy were the instructor, he would be an unparalleled demonic teacher compared to Lenox and Hoyt.”

“That’s right.”

Crockta finished arranging the training grounds and returned to Hoyt with an innocent expression.

“Now it is resolved. Kulkulkul!”

“.....”

Anyway, thanks to Crockta’s work, Hoyt could leave his position with a relaxed mind. Crockta suddenly stopped before he was about to leave the training ground. There was a stick in a corner of the training ground.

All orcs knew what it was. The stick where Lenox’s helmet had been. After he died, the steel helmet had always been watching the training ground.

“Hoyt. I should put the helmet back.”

“No. You should continue to use it.”

Immediately before the battle against the empire, he had received Lenox’s helmet from Simba and Kumarak. Crockta had continued carrying Lenox’s helmet.

“There is more work to do in the future.” Crockta nodded.

The military expedition was on the verge of arriving. At that time, Lenox’s helmet would cover Crockta’s head again.

“Where is Kumarak?”

“He went out for a walk with Simba, and they will be back soon. Not just that, Anya, Wallachwi and other promising orcs have come.”

“Promising orcs?”

Zankus said with a smile, “I’ve met them. They will be your competitors. They are still immature, but I am looking forward to them.”

The orcs like Zankus had already built their achievements and became legendary, but there would be a new generation like Crockta.

"Tiyo and Anor, you are their targets as well, so be ready."

Anor jolted with surprise. "M-Me?"

"There are high-level shooters and necromancers who want to prove they are better than you."

Tiyo burst out laughing. "Stupid bastards *dot!* They won't be able to think such a cheeky thing after they taste General *dot!* I want to see it!"

"Kulkul, you are a very spirited gnome friend."

They chatted while entering the pub.

Crockta's eyes became distant. This was the place where he met Gulda and asked for advice about how to become qualified to be a warrior. The cheerful warrior Gulda who laughed and talked a lot. Even when he was about to die in the dungeon, he didn't lose his sense of humor as he laughed.

At that moment.

"Kuhalhalhalhalhal!"

Suddenly, Crockta heard familiar laughter. He doubted his eyes. There was an orc warrior resembling Gulda, who had the same laugh.

"That is Gurokchwi, Gulda's son."

"Gulda's son...!"

Crockta grinned. His appearance seemed to awaken Crockta. He was an orc warrior. Orc warriors didn't look at the past. He would enjoy this moment, like Gulda's son.

"Drink!"

They started drinking beer with the orcs. Others soon appeared.

"What? The Crockta from that time has become so big? You've become a pretty big guy."

“Everybody is gathered! Drinking beer without me! Drink! Grrung!”

“Kuaang!”

Within a short time, Anya, Kumarak, Simba and other orcs in Orcrox were gathered.

“I'll drink a beer as well... kuhul... hul!”

Wallachwi appeared in front of them and smiled while drinking a beer. Anyone who saw this sight would doubt their eyes. Here, in a pub in Orcrox, was a gathering of those lauded as legends.



PtF by: traitorATZEN